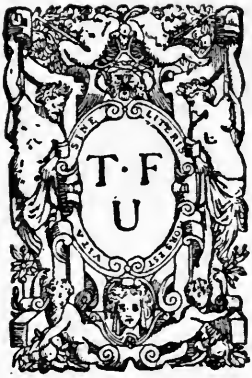
MIRIAM'S SCHOOLING

MARK RUTHERFORD

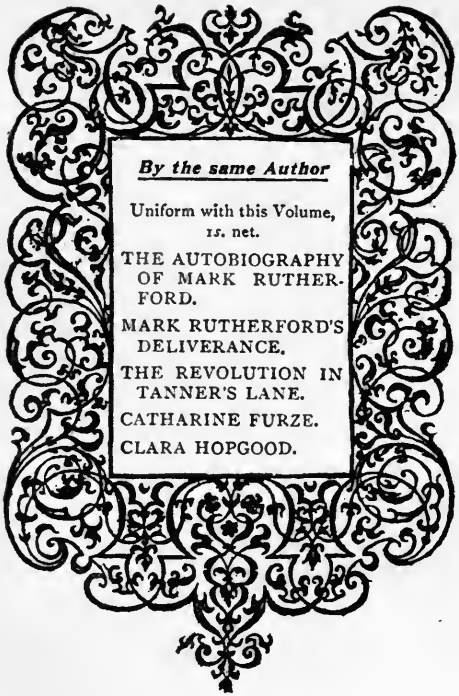
Purchased for the Library
of the
University of Toronto
out of the proceeds of the fund
bequeathed by
T. B. Phillips Stewart, B.A., LL.B.
Ob. A.D. 1892



THE WORKS OF
MARK RUTHERFORD

*

MIRIAM'S SCHOOLING



By the same Author

Uniform with this Volume,
1s. net.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MARK RUTHERFORD.

MARK RUTHERFORD'S DELIVERANCE.

THE REVOLUTION IN TANNER'S LANE.

CATHARINE FURZE.

CLARA HOPGOOD.

Nihil·aliud·quam· bene·ausus·
·vana· contemnere·
A·LOSPITT·Sc

W5892

MIRIAM'S SCHOOLING

AND OTHER PAPERS

BY

MARK RUTHERFORD

EDITED BY HIS FRIEND

REUBEN SHAPCOTT

[by William Hale White]

SEVENTH EDITION

LONDON
T. FISHER UNWIN
ADELPHI TERRACE

130123
5/12/13

PR
5795
W7 M5
19--

All rights reserved

TO

STEPHEN WILLSHER.

I dedicate this result of my editorial labours to you, because you were dear to our friend who is dead, and are almost the only person now alive, save myself, who knew him at the time these papers were written. A word of explanation is necessary with regard to the picture at the beginning of the book. You will remember that Rutherford had in his possession a seal, which originally belonged to some early ancestor. It was engraved with a device to illustrate a sentence from Livy. The meaning given to the sentence was not exactly Livy's, but still it may very well be a little extended, and there is no doubt that the Roman would not have objected. This seal, as you know, was much valued by Rutherford, and was curiously connected with certain events in his life which happened when Miriam was at school. Nevertheless, it cannot anywhere be found. It has been described, however, to Mr. Walter Crane, and he has reproduced it with singular accuracy. It struck me, that although it has no direct relation with anything in the volume, it might be independently interesting, especially considering the part the motto played in Rutherford's history.

R. S.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
GIDEON	1
SAMUEL	13
SAUL	29
MIRIAM'S SCHOOLING	47
MICHAEL TREVANION	155

GIDEON.

The story which Jotham told his children on the day before his death concerning the achievements of his father Gideon —His comments and those of Time thereon.

I AM an old man, and I desire before I die to tell you more fully the achievements of your grandfather. Strange that this day much that I had forgotten comes back to me clearly.

During his youth the children of the East possessed the land for seven years because we had done evil. We were driven to lodge in the caves of the mountains, so terrible was the oppression. If we sowed corn, the harvest was not ours, for the enemy came over Jordan with the Midianites and the Amalekites and left nothing for us, taking away all our cattle and beasts of burden. We cried unto God, and He sent a prophet to us, who told us that our trouble came upon us because of our sins, but otherwise he did nothing to help us. One day your grandfather was threshing wheat, not near the threshing-floor, for the Midianites watched the threshing-floors to see if any corn was brought there, but close to the wine-press. It was at Ophrah in

Manasseh, the home of his father. While he threshed, thinking upon all his troubles and the troubles of his country, not knowing if he could hide enough corn to save himself and his household from hunger and death, the angel of the Lord descended and sat under the oak. He may have been there for some time before my father was aware of him, for my father was busy with his threshing, and his heart was sore. At last he turned and saw the angel bright and terrible, and before he could speak the angel said to him, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." My father, as I have said, was threshing by the wine-press, on his guard even there lest he should be robbed or slain, and it seemed strange to him that the angel should say the Lord was with him. So strange did it seem, that even before he fell down to worship, he turned and asked the seraph why, if the Lord was with him, all this mischief had befallen them, and where were all the miracles which the Lord wrought to save His people from the land of Egypt. For there had been neither sign nor wonder for many years—nothing to show that the Lord cared for us more than He did for the heathen. My father had thought much over all the deeds which the Lord had done for Israel; he had thought over the passage of the sea when Israel could not find any way open before them, and the very waves which were to overwhelm them rose like a wall and became their safeguard. But he himself had seen nothing of this kind, and he almost doubted if the tales were true, and if times had not always been as they were then, all events happening alike to all, and hardly believing that God had ever appeared to man.

The angel did not answer him, but looked him in the face, and said, "Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?" My grandfather, Joash, was one of the poorest men of his tribe, and as for my father, nobody had ever thought anything of him, nor had he thought anything of himself. *He*, a solitary labourer, unknown, with no friends, no arms; he to do what the princes could not do! he to lead these frightened slaves against soldiers who were as the sand for numbers! It was not to be believed, and yet—there sat the angel. It was broad noon; in the shade of the oak his light was like that of the sun. It was not a dream of the night, and he could not be mistaken. Nay, the angel's voice was more sharp and clear than the voice in which we speak to one another—a voice like the command of a king who must not be disobeyed. Yet he comforted my father. "Surely I will be with thee," he added, "and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man." If the Lord was to be with him, my father need not have hesitated, but in truth he did not care for the duty which was thrust upon him. He would have been glad to do anything for his country which was within his power, but he did not feel equal to the task of leading it against its oppressors, nor did he covet it. He would rather have endured in silence and died unknown than take such a weight upon his shoulders, for he was not one of those who desire power for power's sake. The apparition, too, was so sudden. The angel was there with his divine face looking steadily at him, with eyes so piercing that no secret in the inmost soul could remain hidden from them, and the man upon whom

they were turned could not even think without being sure that his thought was known. Yet my father doubted, and this dread of the task imposed on him increased his doubt. Yes; he doubted an order given him at midday by a messenger sitting in front of him flaming with heavenly colour. It might after all be a delusion. He prayed, therefore, for a sign, and then as he prayed he thought he might be smitten for his presumption. But the angel was tender to his misgivings, and said he would wait for the offering which was to test his authority. My father went into the house and brought out a kid and unleavened bread, and presented it. The angel directed him to put the flesh and the cake on the rock and pour out the broth. He did so, and the angel then rose, and stretching out the staff that was in his hand, touched the flesh and cakes. No sooner had he touched them than—wonder of wonders!—a fire leapt up out of the rock; they were consumed before his eyes, and the angel had departed. A great terror overcame my father, for it had always been said that it was impossible for man to look upon a Spirit from the Lord and live. He was left alone, too, with the message, but without the Comforter, and he cried unto God in despair, not knowing what to do. As he cried, a word was spoken in his ear soft and sweet, like the voice of the aspen by the brook; soft and sweet, and yet so sure: "Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die." Then he rose and built an altar, to mark the sacred spot where God had talked with him and he had received his divine commission. There it is to this day in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. As you pass it, remember that where those

stones now stand the Most High conversed with him whose blood is in your veins.

As yet Gideon was without any direct orders, but that night he heard again the same soft, sweet voice, and it commanded him to build another altar upon the highest point of Ophrah, to throw down Baal's altar, and upon the altar to the Holy One to sacrifice the second of the bullocks belonging to Joash, the bullock of seven years old, burning it with the wood of the great idol. The angel under the oak was before my father's eyes, the soft, sweet voice, telling him he should not die, was in his ears; but not even the Lord God can conquer our fears, and although my father was a brave man and saved Israel, no man ever had worse sinkings of heart than he. It was as if he had more courage and more fear than his fellows. He did what the Lord said unto him, but he was afraid to do it by day, for not only was his tribe against him, but his father's house also. He took ten of his servants, and when the city awoke one morning the altar of Baal was cast down, the altar to the Lord God stood on the hill, and there lay on it the half-burnt logs of the image of Baal. Our nation has never believed in Baal as it has believed in the Lord God. How should it believe in Baal? Baal has done nothing for it, but the Lord God brought us from Egypt through the desert, and was the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. Nevertheless, when the altar of Baal was cast down and the idol was destroyed the people demanded the death of Gideon, and you know that at this day, though Baal is a false god, and in their hearts they confess it, they would

murder us if we said anything against him: they went therefore to Joash and told him to bring forth his son that they might slay him. These, my children, were not the Midianites nor the Amalekites, but our own nation. At the very time when the heathen were upon us we turned from the Lord to Baal, and sought to destroy the man who could have rescued us. Thus we have ever done, and we are surely a race accursed. But Joash secretly contemned Baal, although until now he had not ventured to say anything against him. It made him bold to see how his son and his servants had overthrown the altar and burnt the idol which lay there charred and unresisting. He stood up before the altar, and facing the mob which howled at him, asked them why *they* should take upon themselves to plead for Baal: "If he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar." The charred logs never stirred; there was no sound in the sky; Joash was not struck dead; Baal was proved to be nothing. That was a sight to see that morning: the ashes smouldering in the sunlight, the raging crowd, Gideon and his fellows behind Joash, and Joash calling on Baal to avenge himself if he was a god as his worshippers pretended. Ah, if that had been Jehovah's altar! When Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire before the Lord, fire came down from the Lord and devoured them. When Miriam spoke against His servant she became a leper; and when Korah, Dathan, and Abiram blasphemed, they were swallowed up in the pit. But Baal could not move a breath of heaven on his behalf. What kind of a god is he? A god who cannot punish those who insult him is but a word.

As for Gideon, he grew in strength. Nothing happened to him because he had thus dared Baal. He went about his work daily; no judgment fell on him, and nobody dared to meddle with him.

Soon afterwards the Midianites and Amalekites, who had withdrawn for a while, overspread the land again, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel. Gideon having suffered nothing for his insult to Baal, had become bolder. Moreover, his tribe, the Abiezrites, had seen that he had suffered nothing. Thus it came to pass that when the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he blew a trumpet, all Abiezer followed him. Not only so; he sent messengers through Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, and they came up to meet him, the very people who a few months before would have stoned him. They thronged after him, and now professed themselves believers in Jehovah. They were not hypocrites. They really believed now, after a fashion, that Baal could not help them. Their fault was that they believed one thing one day and another thing the next. That has always been the fault of the people. Your grandfather did not despise them for their instability. So far as they were not stable to Baal it was good, and he pitied them as they flocked to his standard, hoping that he could deliver them. He blew the trumpet, and at the simple blast of that trumpet in each village and town the nation seemed to rise as one man, such strength was there in its tones. These men had been idolaters, and it might have been thought that to turn them all would have taken years of persuasion; but no, at the simple sound of the trumpet the religion of Baal vanished.

Gideon was now at the head of a great host; he had

been favoured with visions from the Most High; the angel of the Lord had appeared to him; he had burnt the image; and yet now, when the army was round him, fear fell upon him again, and he doubted if he could save Israel, or if God would keep His promise. So it always was with him, as I have already said. He therefore prayed for another sign, and the Lord did not rebuke him, as a man would have done if his promise had been mistrusted. Gideon's test was strange; he did not pray that he might see the angel again, for the thoughts that came into his mind were always strange, not like those of other men, and were unaccountable even to himself. That night the fleece of wool on the ground was wet and the earth was dry. He prayed yet again, and still God was tender to him, for He knows the weakness of the creatures He has made. This time the fleece was dry and the earth was wet, and Gideon thereupon rose up early with all the host, and moved towards the host of Midian, till he came in sight of them as they lay in the valley by the hill of Moreh.

But the Lord would not have so many to do His work, and most of them were afraid and useless. He therefore commanded Gideon to send away all who were frightened, and ten thousand only were left. These ten thousand were still too many, for most of them were impatient, not able to restrain themselves, and likely to fail, either through fear or foolhardiness, in the stratagem the Lord designed. He therefore commanded Gideon, when they were all thirsty, to bring them down to the water. Nine thousand seven hundred were in such a hurry to reach it that they dropped on their knees to

drink, but three hundred were collected and patient, and were content to lift their hands to their mouths. The three hundred were kept and the rest sent home. That night God, the ever merciful, had promised Gideon to deliver the Midianites into His servant's hands, and had confirmed His promise by miracle, but nevertheless He directed Gideon to go down to the camp, so that he might hear a man's dream and its interpretation, and be further strengthened in his faith. Gideon went down and listened at a tent door; and when the dream was told, how a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent and smote it that it fell, all fear departed, and he rose up and went back to the three hundred, and cried to them, "Arise; for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian."

Forthwith he divided his three hundred into three bands, and each man took an empty pitcher and placed a torch inside it. In the dead of the night they marched to the camp, this little three hundred, and placed themselves round it. Then Gideon broke his pitcher and showed his torch, and all the others did likewise, and shouted, "The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon."

The host cried and fled, for a terror from the Lord descended on them, and turned their own swords against them. When they were defeated all Israel went out after them, and there was great slaughter, and Oreb and Zeeb, two princes of Midian, were slain.

As soon as the victory was achieved, and while he was yet in pursuit, the men of Ephraim turned upon him and abused him because he had not taken them with him to fight the battle against the Midianites, but never had they lifted a finger to save themselves before

Gideon appeared. When, however, he had caught and destroyed Zebah and Zalmunna, the two Midianitish kings, and had chastised Succoth and beaten down the tower of Penuel, Israel came to him and asked him to rule over them, but he would not. He cared not to be king. He remembered with what difficulty he had believed the angel and the promise, the sickly faintness which had overcome him on that night before the Midianitish overthrow. Whatever he had done had not been his doing, but the Lord's; and how did he know that the Lord's help would continue? The thought of being king, and of having a set office, perhaps without the Lord's assistance, was too much for him. He was right in his refusal. He was one of those men who can do much if left to themselves, and if they are supported by the Most High, but who shrink and tremble when something is expected from them. "The Lord shall be your King," he said. He trusted that God would speak to the nation as He had spoken to him, and without any leader would guide them aright. That is not the Lord's way. But though Gideon would not be king, he desired some honour, and he asked that he might have the ear-rings of the Midianites who had fallen. Therewith he made an image, a thing forbidden. It stood in his house, a record of what the Lord had done for him; and yet this very record became a snare, and Israel fell to worshipping it, and Jehovah was displaced by the testimony of His own love for us.

Your grandfather is now dead. Abimelech reigns in his place, and has slain all the children of Gideon save myself. Israel has returned to Baal; its strength

has departed; before long we shall be subdued under the Philistines. Excepting in our own house, there are none that have not gone a-whoring after Baal; the memory of the battle by the hill Moreh is clean forgotten; and soon the memory of my father will also disappear, and it will be as if he had never lived. To think that the vision of the angel in Ophrah and the night in the valley of Jezreel should end in nothing!

That night Jotham died.

Fourteen Hundred Years Later.

"The time would fail me to tell of Gideon, . . . who through faith . . . out of weakness was made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."—*Epistle to the Hebrews.*

Three Thousand Years Later.

"'The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon,' answered Balfour as he parried and returned the blow."—*Old Mortality.*

SAMUEL.

Samuel immediately before his death spoke thus at Ramah :—

I AM now old, and before many days are past I shall be gathered to my fathers. Behold, here I am: witness against me before the Lord: Whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith, and I will restore it you. How could it be that I could be other than that which I have been, seeing that from my childhood upwards I have been the chosen of the Lord, the instrument to do His bidding?

There are none of you who remember the evil days of Eli. Many times before then your fathers went astray after false gods, but when Eli was high priest the Tabernacle itself was profaned by his sons, the sons of Belial; for they robbed the people of their meat which they brought for the sacrifice, so that men abhorred the offering, and they lay with loose women at the door of the Tabernacle, after the manner of those who worship the gods of the heathen. To turn aside from the Lord and serve these gods is wickedness, but to serve them in the presence of the Ark, and to defile the sanctuary itself,

was an abomination worse than any in Ashdod or Gaza. The Lord might assuredly have left Israel to the Philistines, but He desired that there should be a people preserved to do honour to His name, and He called me, called me even as a child, and to Him have I been dedicate. What I have said and done has not been mine but His, and if any have any fault to find, they must find it with Him and not with me.

My father, Elkanah, was one of the faithful in Israel, and he went up yearly to Shiloh; my mother, Hannah, was his beloved wife, though it was Peninnah who had given him children. I was born in answer to a prayer which my mother prayed in bitterness of soul, and she vowed that if she should have a man child he should be the Lord's all the days of his life; no razor should come upon his head, neither should he drink strong drink. My mother redeemed her vow, and I was taken to Shiloh, and there I ministered before the Lord. I lived in the midst of the iniquity which was wrought by the sons of Eli; but although a youth, the vow which my mother had made for me protected me. The Lord had then withdrawn Himself from Israel, and no word had been spoken to us by Him for years, save a message from a prophet who prophesied the fall of Eli and his house. Still I served, although He gave no sign of His presence, for my mother visited me continually, and she kept me strong and pure. One night, when I had lain down to sleep, I suddenly heard a voice, which I took to be the voice of Eli, and it called me by name. This it did thrice, and each time I went to Eli and asked him what he wished with me, but he had not called. When the voice had come again and again, I answered, "Speak;

for Thy servant heareth;" and then for the first time was I bidden to execute a command from the Lord; and I, Samuel, a boy, was ordered to tell Eli, the high priest from the Lord, whose minister he was, that a deed was about to be done which should make tingle the ears of every one who heard it, and that for the iniquity of his sons, and because he did not restrain them, no sacrifice should avail to protect him from judgment. Such was the message given to me; to me, Samuel the child, and thus was I honoured even then. I had never heard the voice before that night, and I lay awake till the morning, fearing to tell Eli what had been said to me, and I went out and opened the doors. But Eli sent for me, and when he saw me he perceived that the Lord had been with me, and he directed me to hide nothing from him of what had been said to me. I told him the vision every whit, and from that day forth I have been at the Lord's bidding, and have interpreted His will to Israel.

Although I had never heard the Lord's voice before, and it came with no sign nor miracle, I did not doubt that it was His, for there was that in it which proclaimed Him. Nevertheless I wondered what His judgment would be, and in what manner it would come to pass. Soon afterwards the Israelites went out to battle against the Philistines in Aphek, and were smitten with great slaughter. Then the elders of Israel, thinkthat the Ark of the covenant would save them, sent to Shiloh and brought it thence, and when it came into the camp they all shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again. Fools to believe that the Ark was anything if the Living God was not with it! When He was with it, and the men of Bethshemesh did but

look at it, they died; but without Him it is nothing. The Israelites were greatly heartened when the Ark came, and the Philistines were afraid, believing, idolaters as they were, that God must be in it. But the Israelites were defeated; thirty thousand of them fell; the very Ark was taken; Hophni and Phinehas were also slain. When Eli heard the news he fell backward and died, and his daughter-in-law, who was in travail, died also. Thus was the word delivered to me fulfilled suddenly in one day, and for the sins of the priests even the Ark whereon were the cherubim was permitted to depart to the Philistines and keep company with Dagon. After that day, when Eli died and I looked into the empty sanctuary, could I hesitate to believe and obey the Lord's word?

The Lord had no mind that the Philistines, who were His scourge for the Israelites, should vaunt themselves over Him, or should believe that of their own strength they had prevailed. Wonderful is He! He takes the wicked to punish His people, and the wicked are but tools in His hand, and He uses them for His own designs. The Ark came to Ashdod, and was put in the house of Dagon; but when the men of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the Ark. They took Dagon and set him in his place again; and when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the Ark, and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold. Furthermore, the men of Ashdod were destroyed with a secret and dreadful disease. They thereupon determined to get rid of the Ark, and

they sent it to Gath. When it came to Gath the pestilence fell upon the men of Gath also, and they sent it away to Ekron, and the pestilence fell also upon the men of Ekron. Then the wise men of the Philistines were called together, and they counselled that the Ark should be returned with a trespass-offering to Israel, and that it should be carried in a new cart by two milch kine on which there had come no yoke, and that their calves should be brought home from them. Then if the kine of their own accord took the cart to Bethshemesh, it would be known that it was the God of Israel who had plagued the land; but if they refused to go, then it might be chance which had done it. The Ark was placed in the cart, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon the kine. Remembering their calves, they nevertheless went straight along the road to Bethshemesh, lowing as they went, and turning not aside to the right hand or to the left, and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Bethshemesh. The men of Bethshemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley, and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the Ark, and rejoiced to see it, and the cart came into the field of Joshua the Bethshemite, and stood there, where there was a great stone, and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine as a burnt-offering. And the Levites took down the Ark, and the coffer that was with it, wherein the jewels of stone were, and put them on the great stone, and the men of Bethshemesh offered burnt-offering and sacrifices. When the Philistines had seen all these things, and when they knew that the plague in their land was stayed, did they acknowledge the Lord God? How should they, seeing that they were not His elect?

The children of Israel continually turned aside to the lewd gods of the heathen, and at times it seemed as if the whole earth would be given up to the abominations of the Canaanites. The Lord had brought us out of Egypt, and through the desert. He had appeared to us on Sinai, and had given us His commandments, by which alone we could live. He had revealed unto us that we should be pure, and separate ourselves from the filth around us. He had roused up Moses, and Joshua, and the Judges, all of whom strove to preserve and ever build higher and stronger the wall which was to protect us, so that the sacred Law and the service of the one God might continue. Israel was but a handful in the midst of Philistines and Amalekites, nations which worshipped Baal with fornication and all kinds of uncleanness, and Israel was ever at the point of mingling with them. Then it would have been forgotten as they will be forgotten; but if it will only abide in the Law, as given in thunder and lightning in the wilderness, it will be great, when, except for their struggles with Israel, the recollection of Amalekite and Philistine shall have perished.

I often was alone amidst a people which had well nigh all gone astray, but I remembered the voice which I heard in the Temple when I was a child. I sought the Most High day and night, and He came very close to me, and it became clearer and clearer to me that all things were as nothing compared with the Law, and that everything was to be set aside for its sake. Alone, I say, I testified on His behalf, but He kept me. Neither women nor wine have I ever known when men were given over to women and wine: His Vision has filled me, dedicate to Him ere I was born.

The Lord chastised Israel through their enemies, and I besought the people to turn away from the Philistine gods and their iniquities. I gathered them together in Mizpeh: the Philistines heard of it, and came down upon Mizpeh, thinking that now they could wipe us out from the face of the earth. Kings have had their captains, but I had none, and was not a man of war; the people were in a panic; their lascivious idolatry of Baal had destroyed their strength, and the enemy lay opposite us. That night I did not sleep, but went to the Lord in prayer. If I had had nothing but my own strength which I could trust I should have fainted, for what could I, unlearned in battle, do against such an army, and with no soldiers save a frightened mob, which knew that it deserved God's wrath. I wrestled with the Most High as Jacob wrestled, and I implored Him to remember His promise to our fathers. I called to mind that day by the borders of the sea, when His angel which went before the camp of the Israelites removed and went behind them, and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face and stood behind them, and how the waters were a wall on the right hand and on the left, and in the morning watch the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians. I called to mind the night when Gideon and his three hundred stood round the Midianites, and the Lord set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host. I called to mind the voice which spoke to me when as a child I lay on my bed in the Lord's House. As I communed and wrestled, the tent was filled with light, brighter than

that of the sun at noon. No word was spoken, but I knew it was the light of Him whom to see is death, but whose light is life. All fear departed, and as the glory slowly waned, sleep overcame me—sleep like that of an infant; and when the morning dawned, and I opened the doors of my tent and watched the sun rise, I was strong with the strength of ten thousand men, and rejoiced, although the Philistines were like the sand on the seashore for multitude. I caused the trumpet to sound, and brought Israel together. On the hill there in Mizpeh, in sight of the people who stood round trembling, I builded an altar and slew a lamb, and offered it as a sacrifice to Him who had appeared unto me. I prayed again, for as the smoke of the burnt-offering rose in the clear air, the Philistines came up the hill to battle with us, and the people cried, and were on the point of fleeing this way and that way, to be pursued and slain. I commanded them to be still. The Philistines drew nearer and nearer, and I prayed ever more and more earnestly. The smoke of the offering was beginning to die down, and yet I prayed. The fire was well nigh out to the last spark, and for a moment I doubted, forgetful of the vision, for the music of the army of Dagon could now be heard. Suddenly the fire flamed up on high from the grey ashes, as if a heap of the driest wood of summer had been thrown on it, and I saw a little cloud gather on the other side of the Philistine hosts, and I knew that my prayer was answered. The flame dropped instantly, but the cloud spread itself even as I looked, and the wind arose, and hither and thither across the cloud flashed the lightning. Onward it came till it rested over the Philistines, and then it broke and

descended on them, and they were shut out from us in thick darkness. The thunder of the Lord crashed and rolled, and we saw His lightnings pierce down like swords. Silent we stood, and presently the cloud lifted, and the Philistines, who, a few minutes before, marched against us in order, were a confused mass, struggling hither and thither, and many of them were lying dead on the ground. Then, with one accord, Israel shouted, and ran and smote the Philistines until they came under Bethcar. I went not with them; but when they had all departed, I took a stone and set it up between Mizpeh and Shen, and wrote on it Ebenezer, for hitherto had the Lord helped us—the Lord, I say, and never a man, as it was the Lord and never a man who has helped us since we left Egypt.

After that defeat the Philistines troubled us no more, and the cities which they had taken from us were restored; but when I became old, the people grew restless, and desired a change. The Lord, to humble me, and prevent boasting by His servant, had afflicted me with two sons, who obeyed not His commandments; and the people put forward these two sons, who were judges under me, as a reason why a king should be given them. If, however, my sons did injustice, I was still alive to whom appeal could be made, and why should a king, because he was a king, be better? The Lord had brought us out of Egypt, and had ruled us through His ministers. We had no court, with women and with splendour; and those who won our battles lived like those whom they led. Our gold and our silver were saved for the House of the Lord, which was His, and for all of us. The office of king was foreign

to us: it was heathen and hateful to me. None more earnestly than I worshipped the Lord, and submitted myself to His direction, and imposed His will even to death upon the people. But that a man, because he was called king, should rule, and send the people hither and thither for his own ends, and slaughter them, was horrible to me. I sought the Lord in prayer to know how I should meet this request, and He counselled me to yield.

I assembled the people together, and rehearsed unto them all that had been done for them without the help of a king. I foretold to them that the king would be for himself, and not for them—that he would press their sons and daughters into his service; but the people would not listen to me. The Lord had said unto me that they had not rejected me, but rejected Him that He should not reign over them, as they had ever done since the day when they were brought up out of Egypt. I cared not, however, for their rejection of me, but because it was He who was rejected. I thought over it night and day, and it well nigh broke my heart.

Those who had hitherto been placed over us had not been chosen because they were the sons of the rich, or of those who were chosen before them. Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Jephthah, were all of them select of the Lord from the people. Nay, even a woman had been taken to judge Israel—Deborah the prophetess, who dwelt under the palm-tree here between Ramah and Bethel. It was Deborah who sent for Barak to lead the host against Sisera, and Barak said to her that if she went he would go, but if she went not he would not go, so

mighty was her presence. Sisera gathered together his army and all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron; but Deborah spoke a word in the ears of Barak, when he was afraid, and Sisera was discomfited with all his chariots and his host. He fled, and it was a woman, Jael, the wife of Heber, who slew him—for ever honoured be her name. In the days of Shamgar, the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byeways; the rulers ceased in Israel; the people chose new gods; there was war in the gates; there was no shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel until Deborah arose. The family of Gideon also was the poorest in Manasseh, and yet it was to him that the angel was sent, and he subdued the Midianites and the children of the East. This hitherto had been the Lord's way with us; and now we were to abandon Him for a king, whose children, because they were king's children, were to be our commanders. It well nigh broke my heart, I say. The glory of the Tabernacle was henceforth to be dim, overshadowed by the pomp of a monarch. I could not endure it, and again I went to the Lord, and besought Him to turn the people or visit them with the thunder and lightning of Mizpeh, that they might repent of their iniquity and live. But He would not speak to them beyond what He had spoken through me, and I returned and sent the assembly away, every man to his own city.

I called the people together in Mizpeh again, the place where they had seen the Lord save them Himself, and yet even there they would not yield. Then I prophesied against them, because they had cast aside

Him who had delivered them out of all their adversities and tribulations; and I caused all their tribes to assemble before me. Saul the son of Kish was taken, and the fools shouted God save the king. I did my best for them. I wrote laws for them to protect them against him, and I put them in a book and laid them up in the sanctuary.

Henceforth I was in a measure more solitary than before. Saul was a brave man, and led the people to war, and they were pleased with his success, but he was not single in his service of the Lord, and he had for a wife a Horite, one Rizpah, who worshipped false gods. He believed he could make Israel a nation by battles, and he saw not what I saw—that the one thing necessary for our salvation was to keep ourselves pure and separate. The people complained that the Law was a burden, but it was their safeguard: it was the Law which marked them off from the heathen, who were doomed to fall by their sins. I toiled daily to preserve the Law, and to insist upon the observance of its ceremonies, knowing full well that if the people let them go, they would let go the commandments from Sinai; would let go the sobriety and the chastity of their bodies; would mix in the worship of Baal, and be lost. Saul was no observer of ceremonies, and considered them naught, the idiot, who forgot that they were ordained of God, with whom there is no small nor great, and that through them the people are taught. More solitary than ever I was, I say; but I sought the Lord more than ever, and kept closer to me the memory of the Voice which first called me. If Israel is to live, it will not be because Saul overcame the Amalekites

and Philistines, but because the Lamp of God in my hands has not been extinguished. When the Philistines came against us at Michmash, Saul was in Gilgal, and I went to meet him there. Because I came not at the time appointed, he, the impious one, took upon himself to offer the sacrifice, pleading that the people were leaving him, and that the Philistines were encamped against him. He forgot the thunder and lightning at Mizpeh, and that it was his duty to obey the least word of the Lord, whatever might happen. It was a surer way to save Israel than to teach it by the king's example that the ordinances of the Lord could be set aside because it was convenient. I cared not for myself: how can he who is His messenger care for aught save His honour? But I saw by this act of Saul what was in him—that it was an example of his heart—that if he could conquer the Philistines he cared not for the Law. His victories without the Law would have melted away like snow in summer. They would have been as the victories of Philistines over Amalekites, or Amalekites over Philistines. It was one of the first things he did after becoming king, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon me, and I denounced him, and was directed to seek a successor outside his house. If the kingdom had remained in the house of Saul, Israel would have become a heathen tribe, and it was not for this that God called it out of Egypt and led it through the Red Sea.

I was commanded to send Saul against the Amalekites. What Amalek did to us when we came out of Egypt had been written down, and the direction concerning him. He met us by the way, and smote the

hindmost of us, even all that were feeble, when we were faint and weary; and it had been said to our fathers that when we had rest from our enemies round about us, we were to blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven—"*Thou shalt not forget it*" was the word delivered to us. I had the record of the battle in Rephidim when Joshua discomfited Amalek, not in his own strength, but in the strength of the uplifted arms of the aged Moses, the man of God. His arms, withered and feeble, defeated Amalek that day. Does not the altar still stand, Jehovah-nissi, to testify that we should war with Amalek from generation to generation? Furthermore, Amalek feared not God, but worshipped strange gods with abominable rites, after which the sons and daughters of Israel lusted. It was the Lord's desire that we should root up Amalek, as a man roots up a weed, and fears to leave a thread of it in the ground, lest it should again grow.

Saul was willing to arm himself against the Amalekites, and to do his best to defeat them after the manner of a king, and to bring them into subjection; but he saw not with my eyes, and knew not what a Law of the Lord was. Therein have I stood apart from Saul and his friends and this nation. They also were not ignorant of the Law, but they thought it could be observed like the laws of men, not understanding that it is binding to the last jot and tittle, and that if a man fails at the last jot or tittle, he fails altogether.

Saul smote the Amalekites, and everything that was vile and refuse he utterly destroyed with the edge of the sword, but he spared Agag and the best of the

spoil; and when he came to meet me, he saluted me, and said he had performed the commandment of the Lord. His commandments are not thus to be performed, and I asked him what meant then the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen. He had reserved them, he said, as a sacrifice. I asked him whether the Lord had as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord. I told him that to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams; and I denounced him there, and foretold that his kingdom should be given to a neighbour better than he. He was then greatly afraid, for although he feared not the Lord, and was brave before his enemies, he was at times much given to secret terror, and he besought me to stay with him and pardon him. But I would not, and when I had worshipped, I ordered Agag to be brought before me. He came trembling and asking for mercy, but I hewed him in pieces. Mercy? Mercy to whom? Would it have been mercy to Israel to let him live and become a leader of the Amalekites against us? Moreover, a clear command had been given me, and was set plainly before me, as a candle in front of me in darkness, to which I was to walk, swerving not a hair's breadth, that the Amalekite was to be destroyed utterly; and always when the Light was before me I strove to reach it, never looking this way nor that way. Before Saul also the Light was set, but he went aside, thinking he could come to it if he bent his path and compassed other things, not knowing that the track is very narrow, and that if we diverge therefrom and take our eyes off the Light we are lost. Who was Agag, that I should show any tenderness to him, a foul

worshipper of false gods? I rejoiced when he lay bound for the knife in the agony of death, and his blood was a sacrifice with which God was well pleased.

David now waits until Saul's death, for the king is still a strength in Israel. I fear that David will dishonour himself with grievous sin, for he is a lover of women, and a man of words and of song: treacherous is he also at times. But he belongs to us; he fears the Lord and His prophets and priests; he may go a-whoring, but it will not be after Baal; he will war against the heathen, and will not show mercy to them. Now I am about to die, and to descend into the darkness whither my fathers, and Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses have gone before me. I bless the Lord that I have lived, for I have preserved the knowledge of Him and His Law. My life ends, but the Lord liveth, all honour and glory to His sacred name.

SAUL.

Rizpah the Horite, in her old age, talks of Saul to the wife of Armoni, her son.

THIS is the day on which your husband's father fell on the mountains of Gilboa. Though I was no Israelite, but born in the desert, I was his beloved before he became king. I am eighty years old now, but the blood moves in me, and I grow warm as I think of him. There was not a goodlier person than he—from his shoulders and upwards he was higher than any of the people. Why did the Lord choose him? He never coveted that honour, and he suffered because there was laid on him that which he did not seek. Yet the Lord was right, for there was not one in all Israel so royal as he, and it was he who redeemed it and made it a nation. Samuel had grown old—he was always a priest rather than a captain—and his sons, whom he made judges, turned aside after lucre, took bribes, and perverted judgment. The people were weary of their oppression and the hand of the Amalekites and the Philistines were very heavy on the land. They therefore prayed for a king, and the thing displeased

Samuel, and he tried to turn them from it. But they refused to listen to him, and when they came together at Mizpeh, Saul was the man upon whom the lot fell. Again, I say, he desired not to be king. He had hidden himself on that day, but he could not be hidden, and he was dragged forth to glory and to ruin. I was there: I heard the shouts as they cried God save the king. I saw him no more that day, for the tumult was great, and there was much for him to do. But that evening he came back to me at Gibeah; he, my Saul, came to me as anointed king. O that night! never to be forgotten, were I to live a thousand years, when I held the king in my arms! Never—no, not even on the night when I first became his—had I known such delight. I have seen more misery than has fallen to the lot of any woman in this land, and it has not passed over me senseless. I am not one of those who can go through misfortune untouched, as a drop of oil can rise through water. I have taken it all in, felt it all, to the last sting there was in it; and yet now, when I call to mind the night after he was crowned, and its rapture of an hour—the strength and the eagerness of his love: the strength, the eagerness, and the pride of mine—I say it is good that I have lived. The next morning I saw him with his valiant men—the men whose heart God had touched; how he set them in order, and how they followed him—him higher than any of them, from the shoulders upwards; and I said to myself, he is mine, the king is mine, that body of his is mine, and I am his.

Tell you all about him? How can I? But I will tell you a little—what I have told you again and again

before—so that you may tell it to your children, and the name of Saul may never be forgotten.

After he was chosen, the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? But he held his peace, for he foresaw what was at hand. Nahash the Ammonite came up and encamped against Jabesh-gilead; and when the men of Jabesh-gilead offered to become his slaves if he would but make a covenant with them, he consented, but upon this condition, that they should thrust out their right eyes. Such thralls had the children of Israel become whom Saul had to save, that Nahash dared to put this upon them in mockery. They sent messengers to Gibeah, where Saul was—not to him, but to tell the people there; and Saul heard the message as he drove the herd out of the field after work, for he was still at his farm, his day not yet having come. When he listened to the story of the men of Jabesh-gilead, the Spirit of God came upon him; and he took a yoke of his oxen and hewed them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel, saying, Whosoever cometh not after Saul, and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. The fear of the Lord fell on the people, such strength was there in Saul's command, and they came out with one consent. He numbered his men, divided them into three bands, marched all night from Bezek, fell upon the Ammonites in the morning watch, and so slaughtered and scattered them that two of them were not left together. Where now were the men of Belial who had mocked him? The people cried out that they might be brought forth and put to death; but Saul, ever noble and great of heart, forbade it. "Not a man," he said, "shall be put

to death this day, for to-day the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel."

The Philistines had for a long time oppressed the land, so that men who were their neighbours hid themselves in caves, thickets, and rocks. They were not armed, for the Philistines had forbidden the working of iron, lest their slaves should have anything wherewith they might defend themselves. Having defeated the Ammonites, Saul went up to Gilgal, and a great crowd came after him trembling. He waited there seven days for Samuel, and meanwhile the people began to slip away from him. What was he to do? He could wait no longer, and he commanded the burnt-offering to be brought to him. Just as he had made an end of the sacrifice, Samuel appeared, and Saul went out to meet him and take his blessing. But Samuel turned upon him and doomed him, because he had meddled with the priest's office. He was to be cast out from his kingship, and another was chosen in his place. That was the root of all my lord's trouble, as we shall afterwards see—the seed of the madness which made his life worse than death. What had he done? Nothing, but set fire to that miserable beast. Had he slain a man, or robbed the widow or the fatherless, or defrauded those who came to him for judgment, his punishment would have been just; but that he should be deposed because, in his extremity against the Lord's enemies, he had taken upon him to do what Samuel neglected to do, was a strange sentence from the Lord. Would you or I deal so with our friends? would we give them no place for repentance? would we let the penalty endure when the heart is changed and forgive-

ness is sought? The Lord's ways are wonderful. But it was Samuel's doing. If it had not been for Samuel, the Lord would have shown mercy. Samuel was ever the priest, and had no compassion in him. He had been chosen as a child, and he never forgot he was the Lord's selected servant. He hated Saul because Saul was king, and he loved to show his power over him. Before that day in Gilgal, he had called down thunder and lightning from heaven to show that Jehovah listened to him, and to prove that Jehovah resented the request that the people should have some one to command them other than the sons of Eli. He hated Saul because the people obeyed him and fled to him when they were in danger. Who could help obeying him; who was there who knew him who did not love to obey? However, he was cursed—cursed for a ceremony of the Law; and that dancing David, the man who took Uriah's wife and basely murdered Uriah, was said to be the man after God's own heart.

Soon afterwards the evil spirit fell upon my lord. Samuel had commanded him to smite the Amalekites, and to spare not men or women, infants or sucklings, oxen or sheep, camel or ass. Saul gathered his soldiers together and lay in wait in the valley. In his mercy, for he was ever tender-hearted, he warned the Kenites that they might escape. He then smote the Amalekites from Havilah to Shur, but he took Agag alive, and spared some of the spoil. When the battle was over, Samuel came to meet him, and rebuked him as if he had been a child for what he called rebellion and stubbornness. The priest stood up before the king, and told him that his rebellion was as witchcraft, and his stubborn-

ness as idolatry. "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord," he cried, "He hath also rejected thee from being king." Rebellion, stubbornness! Saul was neither rebellious nor stubborn. He had smitten the Amalekites; in obedience to Samuel's command, he had done what he hated to do; he had slaughtered young and old, but he had saved Agag, and although he humbled himself before Samuel, and prayed him to remain, he would not. Saul laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle; but he departed, and it was rent, and he cursed Saul, and declared that as the garment was rent, so had the Lord rent the kingdom of Israel from him that day, and given it to another better than he. Then Samuel called Agag unto him, and hewed the unarmed man in pieces, and declared he would see Saul no more. Now Saul was brave, the bravest of the brave, but he greatly feared at times what he called his Terror. What it was which troubled him none ever rightly knew. He was not mad as others are mad, for his senses never left him, and he was always the counsel and the strength of the nation, whom they all sought in their distress. But something had caught him of which he could not rid himself, and he would come to me with wild eyes, and clasp me in his arms. I could not comfort him; and all I heard was a strange word or two about a Face which haunted him and would not leave him. I could not comfort him, but it was to me nevertheless he always fled; and although he spoke so little, for he dared not name his Terror, he said to me more than he has said to any man or woman: it was I, it was I more than any other who knew the secrets of the king's soul. My belief is that Samuel brought the

Terror on him. He never forgot that dreadful day when Agag was murdered, and it was always before his eyes that he was doomed, and that there was another man in the land who was to rule in his stead. I tried to appease him. I told him that life to all of us is short, that in the grave there is forgetfulness, and bade him drink wine, lie in my bosom, and shut out the morrow, but it was of no avail. There was nothing to be dreaded in the thought that some one would supplant him, and other men would have endured it in peace; but it was the constant presence of the thought, the impossibility of getting rid of it, which darkened the sun for him. Day after day, night after night, this one thing was before him. It was as if he were bound to a corpse, and ever dragged it after him. Higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upwards, like a lion for courage, and yet he would have fled even to Death from this thing, for he could not face it. What a mockery is the strength of the strongest! A word from the Lord can cause the greatest to grovel in the dust! It was thought that music would help him, and they brought to him David, who was skilled with the harp, and had moreover a ruddy, cheerful countenance. Gay and light of heart was he, and as he sang and played the Terror would sometimes loosen its hold, and Saul was himself again, but it never left him for long.

Much has been made by Saul's enemies of his hatred of David. It came in this way. Saul loved David, and made him a captain, and they went out together to war against the Philistines. When they returned, the women, smitten with his pretty face—they were always ready to go after him, and he after them—

sang aloud in the streets that Saul had slain his thousands and David his ten thousands. The Terror was on Saul; he believed David was Samuel's friend, and David and the Terror became one. He eyed David from that day. He was not blameworthy. It was the Evil Spirit from God, and the Evil Spirit put a fixed thought in his mind, that if he could but remove David, the Terror would depart. Although I hated the son of Jesse from the beginning, I made light of my lord's dread of him, but who can reason against an Evil Spirit from God; and while David was playing the second time, my lord cast a javelin at him to kill him. When the Evil Spirit departed, the desire to destroy David departed with it. After Saul had cast the javelin, Jonathan pleaded with his father for David, and Saul listened, and swore that no harm should befall him; but when David soon afterwards returned from another battle with the Philistines, the Spirit came again and turned David's music into an instrument of torture, and again put the javelin in Saul's hand, and strove through Saul to strike David with it. Hard ridden was Saul by the Spirit at that time, and he went to Ramah to see Samuel; and when he saw him, he, the king, my beloved, was so beset that he tore off his clothes, and lay down naked all night. When he came back, at the feast of the new moon, he sat down to meat with his princes, and with Abner and Jonathan; but David was not there. He asked the reason of his absence, and Jonathan explained that David had leave to go to Bethlehem to visit his father. Jonathan said nothing more, but the Evil Spirit descended even at the feast, in the company of all the lords, and Saul

imagined that Jonathan was plotting against him; and in his fury, possessed by the Lord, he cast his spear against Jonathan also, his own best beloved son. That was the misery of it; the Spirit brought him to violence, not only against those who were his enemies, but against those whom he loved. To me, though, he was ever tender, and over our love the Spirit had no power. Jonathan's anger at the time was fierce; but Jonathan was noble of heart—his father's son, without his father's affliction; and he knew, when he came to himself, that it was not the father whom he honoured who had done this deed. He went out and warned David, but he did not go with him, and presently he returned into the city and comforted his father. When David had gathered together his four hundred knaves in rebellion, Saul sat in Gibeah under the tree there, and his servants stood round him in council. They were all of them valiant and faithful, but he broke out against them, and accused them of conspiring with David against him. "There is none," he cried, "that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me." "None of you that is sorry!" His suffering was so great, and so little was it understood, that he believed no one cared for him, and at times he said bitter things which kept men apart from him, and sent some of them to David. His anguish was all the greater because he thought Jonathan, his son, whom he so much loved, had become estranged from him, and secretly communicated with David, and was content to give up his succession to the royal crown, and take the second place when David should be upon the throne. But again I say it, no

harsh word ever came to me, although for days he would hardly speak; and then, suddenly, as he sat by me, he would lay his head upon my neck, and tears would come of which he was ashamed.

The never-ceasing pursuit of David was sad even to me, and yet when the Spirit left him to himself Saul relented. When David was in Engedi, and hard pressed, he came out to Saul and submitted himself to him. He boasted that he could have slain Saul—what a boast to make! that he had spared the Lord's anointed and the father of Jonathan, his chosen friend!

The king was much given to sudden change. Sometimes his mood would leave him, and his face become clear in a moment, like the heavens in a thunderstorm when the lightning has spent itself, and the wind shifts, and the blue sky in an instant is revealed. Never, when this happened, did he resist, and by constraint remain in his sorrow, but sang and was glad, and if I was beside him, delighted himself with me. The happiest of men would he have been, even as a king, if the Evil Spirit from the Lord would have left him. He was overcome with his ancient love for David, and wept, and acknowledged, although it was false, that David was more righteous than he, and prayed for the Lord's blessing upon him. Yet even then the ever-present Fear was before him. "I know well," he said, "that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand." And he made David swear that he would not cut off the seed of the royal house, so that the name of Saul might live. And David sware: David sware, the blas-

pheming liar, who gave up to the Gibeonites my sons, and the sons of Merab. It was Jonathan, whom Saul had in mind when he caused David to swear; but Saul's prayer was but breath, for the Lord cut off Jonathan in battle, and Saul was the only king of the house of Kish.

After Samuel's death, David, with his men, went over to the Philistines, who gave him Ziklag as the place of his abode. He played the traitor to Achish as he had done to Saul, and he went out against the Geshurites, the Gezrites, and the Amalekites, the friends of Achish, murdering both men and women, and returned and lied to Achish, telling him he had fought against Judah and its allies. Had it been his purpose to hide himself and to do good service to his master Saul in the war which the Philistines were preparing for him, his treachery might have excused him; but he had no mind to assist Saul or Israel. He sang a song after Gilboa in memory of the king and Jonathan, but he came not near them in the day of battle, and he profited by their overthrow. He brought his men to Achish, as if he would go down with him to the fight; but the Philistines distrusted him, and sent him back to Ziklag. Who knows what he intended? He told Achish that he meant to take his part against Saul, but no word of his could ever be believed. Nevertheless, I doubt not that he would have been as good as his promise if it had been permitted to him. It is certain that he knew what was about to happen, and that, if he had been loyal to his prince, he would have striven to assist him.

I remember that dreadful day before the day of Gilboa. The host of the Philistines came and pitched in Shunem

as the sand of the desert for number. Saul had gathered all Israel together, but they were fewer than the Philistines, and disheartened. He knew, moreover, that David and his men were with the enemy; and as he went out that morning, and saw the host of the Philistines lie upon the hillside, he greatly trembled, not with fear of death, for he never feared to die, but because his Terror was upon him, and the Lord refused to speak to him. He inquired of Him, but the Lord answered him not. The high priest had brought the ephod, but was dumb, and the prophets heard nothing. Two nights before the day of the battle, he had sought the Lord for a dream, and had lain down by my side in hope. The dream came, but it was a dream of the Terror, and he shrieked and turned, and clasped me in his arms; and I soothed him, and asked him what he had dreamed, but he could not tell—it was a horror, awful, shapeless, which he dared not try to utter; and he clasped me again, me wretched, clasped me for the last time. He rose and went out in the morning early, went round his army by himself. He was alone, and he knew that God had forsaken him.

In his extremity he bethought him of witchcraft. In his zeal for God, which availed him nothing, he had cast out of the land all those who dealt with familiar spirits, but one was still left at Endor. To her he went to obtain some voice from the unknown world, thinking that by chance light might shine in upon his despair. But when he came to the woman, and she asked him what spirit she should call, he could do nothing but ask for Samuel. He feared him, and yet he desired to see him. It was always strange to me that he, such a

king, should be so subdued by Samuel's presence. It was so in life, and it was so in death. The spirit of Samuel rose, and Saul humbled himself before the shadow. Alas, Samuel had learned no pity through death, and his ghost was as fierce as the living man of years gone. He had passed into the land of emptiness and vanity, yet his wrath burnt as if mortal blood had been in him. Saul bowed unto him and told him his trouble, how he was sore distressed, for the Philistines made war upon him, and God had departed from him, and answered him not. It was a dreadful sight, so the woman herself told me afterwards, a king abasing himself before a spectre of a priest and craving mercy. The worst foe whom Saul had in the land would have felt his heart touched, and the wicked woman herself was moved with great compassion. If success could not be promised, at least some comfort might have been given, but Samuel was bitterness itself; terrible he always was to me, so bitter and so hard that I shuddered at him. He turned upon Saul and denounced him, he, the dead, denounced him who was about to die, and declared that the Lord was his enemy. Enemy! for what, because he had spared Agag? And yet that was, in a measure, the reason; for Saul was too much of a man for the priest, and therefore the priest set up David against him. The ghost stood there, and doomed the king. "The Lord," he cried, "hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David, because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, nor executedst His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day. Moreover, the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee

into the hand of the Philistines; and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines." For this cause Saul was to fall, and his three sons, and there was to be a great slaughter of Israel. When David the adulterer murdered Uriah, was that not a worse crime, yet was his punishment as Saul's? And what punishment there was fell not on David as it would have fallen upon my lord and upon me. After David's son died, he straightway rose up, eat and drank, and went in unto Bathsheba the whore; and she, the wife of Uriah, whom he had murdered, submitted to be comforted by him.

When Saul heard the words of Samuel, he fell straightway in the darkness all along on the earth, and there was no strength in him, for he had eaten no bread all the day nor all the night. The woman offered him bread, but he sat on the bed and would not eat. At last, as the morning was breaking, he consented to eat, and he went away to make ready for the fight. He was assured he would perish that day, and that before the sun set he would be in Sheol with Samuel, but he did not play the coward and flee. He fought as the king he was, but the Philistines were too many for him; the curse from the Lord was upon the Israelites, so that they feared and fled. Jonathan, with Abinadab and Melchishua, his brothers, were around Saul to the last, but they were slain. The men-at-arms dared not come near Saul, but the archers pressed him sorely from afar, and he could not close with them, and he saw his end was at hand. He would not have the Philistines take him alive, wounded for sport, even if they might

spare his life; and he therefore prayed his armour-bearer to thrust him through, but his armour-bearer would not. Thereupon Saul took his sword, and fell upon it; and his armour-bearer fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him. The next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found Saul and his sons dead on Gilboa, and carried off their bodies, shamefully using them. But though the alarm at the victory was great, there were men in Israel who dared do anything for their master, the men of Jabesh-gilead, who remembered what Saul had done for them against the Ammonites; and they went by night and rescued the bodies, and burnt them, and buried them under this tree in Jabesh, whence they afterwards came to Zelah, where I shall lie.

David, when he heard that Saul was dead, sang a song in his praise—David turned everything into songs; but nevertheless he made himself king, and warred against the house of his master. Ever singing and dancing! When the Ark was brought from the house of Obed-edom, David leaped, and danced, and played before it like an empty fool. Michal, who was her father's own daughter, despised her husband—as well she might—for his folly, and rebuked him because he behaved as a vain fellow rather than as a king; but she was abused, and he told her that if she did not honour him, he would be honoured by her maids; and this was true, for he never held back from a woman if she pleased him, and of concubines had a score. My lord never sang, nor danced, nor played; it was as much as he could do if he smiled. Would to God he had smiled oftener; and yet if he could not laugh, he could love. Ah me!

how strait was his embrace. Was the love of that ruddy-faced, light-minded, lying dancer a thousandth part of Saul's? If David had loved Bathsheba, would he have sought by the basest of deceit to force Uriah to her after she had fallen, so that her son might be taken to be his? And yet if Samuel had been alive, would he have cursed David as he did my lord? I think not, for the sin and the lie with Bathsheba, and the murder of Uriah, were not a crime like that of sparing the Amalekite Agag. Nevertheless the Lord visited him also, and he tasted the bitterness of revolt, for Absalom, his own son, turned against him, and lay with his father's concubines in the sun in the sight of all Israel, and sought his father's life. Why do I talk thus? I meant not to talk of David, but of my lord. One word more. We never speak without coming to that dreadful day. Your husband, Armoni, was shamefully handed over to the Gibeonites and hung. May every messenger of evil that does the bidding of Baal and Jehovah for ever follow the man who consented to that deed because Saul had rooted out the Gibeonites from the land in his zeal for the Lord. In his zeal for the Lord! His zeal for the Israelitish Lord, and at Samuel's bidding! It was not the desire of Saul to deal thus with the Gibeonites, for he, the husband of a Horite, was never a fool in his wrath for his God; but Samuel, whom he dreaded more than the Philistines, bade him. And the plague came, and they said it was from the Lord, because of these Gibeonites whom the Lord, through Samuel, had directed should be slain. Ah me! I, a Horite, know not the ways of Jehovah. I sit here in Jabesh and wait till I shall be with those whom I loved, with Saul, Armoni, and his

brother. I go down into the darkness with them, but it will be better than the light. Maybe though dark I shall see them, and be something of a queen—I Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, queen of the first king of Israel, he who has made it a nation.

MIRIAM'S SCHOOLING.

"He wrung the water from his dress, and, plunging into the moors directed his course to the north-east by the assistance of the polar star."—THE MONASTERY.

"That man amongst mortals who has acquiesced in Necessity is wise, and is acquainted with divine things."—EURIPIDES.

GIACOMO TACCHI was a watchmaker in Cowfold. He lived, not in the central square or market-place of the town, for a watchmaker's business in Cowfold was scarcely of sufficient importance for such a position, but two or three doors round the corner. It was in Church Street, just before the private houses begin, a little low-roofed cottage, much lower than its neighbours, for what reason nobody could tell—much lower certainly; and yet there it was, a solid, indisputable, wedged-in assertion, not to be ousted in any way. It had two small bow windows, one belonging to a sitting-room, and the other to the shop. Across the curve of the shop bow window a kind of counter was fixed. Here were Giacomo's lamp, his glass-globe reflector, or light-condenser; here were all his tools; here lay under tumblers or wine-glasses the works of the watches on which he was operating, and here he wrought from morning to night with a lens which slipped into its place in his eye with such wonderful celerity and precision, that it was difficult to believe it had not by long

acquaintance with the eye become as much a part of it as the eyelid itself. Inside the window, along the window frames, hung perhaps twenty or thirty watches, some of which had been cleaned or repaired, and were waiting till their owners might call, whilst others had been acquired in different ways, by exchange or by purchase, and were for sale. There were no absolutely brand new watches in the collection. If a new watch was ordered as a wedding present or a gift to a son or daughter on the twenty-first birthday, it was specially manufactured. Immediately to the left of Giacomo was his regulator, of which he was justly proud, for it did not vary above a minute a month. Nevertheless its performance was checked every week by the watch of the mail-coach guard, who brought the time from St. Paul's as he started from St. Martin's-le-Grand, and communicated it to the Cowfold mail-cart driver. All round the shop were clocks of numerous patterns, but mostly of two types, one Dutch, and one with oak or mahogany case. Perhaps a dozen or so were generally going, and it was rather distracting to a visitor to see the pendulums of the Dutch clocks wagging at different rates, some with excited haste, others with solemn gravity, and no two at the same speed. Each seemed confident it was in direct communication with Greenwich Observatory, and paid not the slightest attention to the others. It was seldom that the footpath in front of the watchmaker's window was empty. Generally a boy or girl stood there with nose flattened against the panes staring at Giacomo busied with his craft. For it was a genuine mystery to the children, and he was a mysterious person in other ways. Under his care was the church clock. He went

up into the tower, and into a great closet in which nobody else in Cowfold had ever been. Furthermore, as an adjunct to the watchmaking, he repaired barometers and thermometers, and it is certain that not a farmer within ten miles of Cowfold knew what was at the back of the plate of his weather-glass.

How a man with such a name as Tacchi came to settle in Cowfold was never understood. Giacomo's father and mother appeared there about the beginning of the century: a son was born within three years after their arrival, and is the Tacchi now before us.

It might have been supposed that his occupation would have inclined him to melancholy. Far from it. He was a brisk, active creature, about middle height, with jet black hair, and a quick circulation. He was never overcome, as he might reasonably have been, with meditations on the flux of time. He never rose in the morning saddened by the thought that the day would be just like the day before, or that the watches with which he had to deal would show just the same faults and just the same carelessness on the part of their possessors. On the contrary, he always sprang out of bed with as much zest and buoyancy as if he were a Columbus confidently expecting that before noon the shores of a new world would rise over the ocean's edge.

Giacomo, when he succeeded to the business, married the daughter of a small farmer in the neighbourhood. It all came about through a couple of little oak wedges. He took a tall clock home after it had been repaired, and as the floor of the living-room on which it stood was uneven, the front of the clock at the base was always wedged up to bring it perpendicular, and keep

the top from overhanging. He was obliged to ask Miriam, the eldest girl, to stand on a footstool, and push the clock towards the wall. As she stretched her right arm up just under the little gilt cherub who expanded his wings above the dial, holding the frame with her left, he stepped back a little, and was suddenly struck with the beauty of her attitude. A lovely line it was from the tips of her fingers down to her heel, and the slight strain just lifted the hem of her gown, and showed the whitest of white stockings, and a shapely foot. Giacomo instantly fell in love.

"Is that right, Mr. Tacchi?" she said.

"Quite right; nothing could be better."

Giacomo would not, however, insert the wedges; they were soft, and might be broader; he would cut some better ones out of mahogany or oak, and bring them the next day. The next day he brought them, and in a very short time married Miss Miriam solely on the strength of the lovely line, the white stockings, and the foot. When she came to live at his house in Cowfold, he found that she did not always stand on the footstool and display the same curve, but nevertheless she made him a fairly good wife, and he and she lived together on the usual marital terms, without any particular raptures, and without any particular discord, for five years, when unfortunately she died, after giving birth to her second child, which was named Miriam, after its mother. Giacomo was left with an elder boy, Andrew, and with the infant.

Andrew grew up something like his mother, a fairly average mortal who learned his lessons tolerably, was distinguished by no eminent virtues nor eminent vices,

no eminent gratitude nor hatreds; and it seemed as if he would one day in the fulness of time do what Cowfold for centuries had done before him—that is to say, succeed his father in his business, marry some average Cowfold girl, beget more average Cowfold children, lead a life unvexed by any speculation or dreams, unenlightened by any revelation, and finally sleep in Cowfold churchyard with thousands of his predecessors, remembered for perhaps a year, and then forgotten for ever.

Miriam, however, was of a different stamp. Her real ancestry was a puzzle. In some respects she resembled her father. Knowing that she was Giacomo's child, it was easy for the observer to trace the lineage of some of her qualities; but nevertheless they reappeared in her on a different scale, in different proportions, so that in action they became totally different, and there were others not inherited from Giacomo which modified all the rest. It is impossible to throw a new characteristic into a given nature, and obtain as a result the original nature *plus* the characteristic added. The addition will most likely change the whole mass, and often entirely degrade or translate it. It is just possible, such are the wonders of spiritual chemistry, that there may have been nothing in Miriam but her father with a touch of her mother, and that the combination of the two may have wrought this curiously diverse product; or the common explanation may have been correct, that in her there was a resurrection of some unknown ancestor, either on the father's or mother's side. She was a big girl—her father was rather short and squat—with black hair and dark eyes, limbs loosely set, with a tendency to sprawl, large feet and hands. She had a handsome, regular

face, a little freckled; but the mouth, although it was beautifully curved, was a trifle too long, and except when she was in a passion, was not sufficiently under the control of her muscles, so that her words escaped not properly formed. Generally she was rather languid in her attitudes, sitting in her chair in any way but the proper way, and often giving her father cause of correction on this point as she grew up, inasmuch as he properly objected that when she came to be thirteen or fourteen she ought to show that she duly appreciated the reasons why her frocks were lengthened. Her room was never in order. Nothing was ever hung up; nothing was put in its place. Shoes were here and there — one might be under the dressing-table and the other under the bed; but with an odd inconsistency she was always personally particularly clean, and although bathing was then unknown in Cowfold, she had a tub, and used it too with constant soap and water. With her lessons she did not succeed, more particularly with arithmetic, which she abhorred. Sometimes they were done, sometimes left undone, but she never failed in history. Her voice was a contralto of most remarkable power, strong enough to fill a cathedral, but altogether undisciplined. She was fond of music, and the organist at the church offered to teach her with his own daughters, if she would sing with them on Sundays; but she could not get through the drudgery of the exercises, and advanced only so far as to be able to take her proper part in a hymn. Here, however, she was almost useless, from incapability of proper subordination, the sopranos, tenors, and basses being well nigh drowned.

She was fond of live creatures, and had cats, canaries, white mice, and rabbits, which she treated with great tenderness; but they were never kept clean, and caused much annoyance to her family. She was also truthful; but what distinguished her most was a certain originality in her criticisms on Cowfold men, women, and events, a certain rectification which she always gave to the conventional mode of regarding them. There was a bit of sandstone rock near the town, by the side of the road, which from time immemorial had been called the Old Man's Nose. It was something like a nose when seen at a certain angle, but why it should have been described as the nose of an old man rather than that of a young man, no mortal could have explained. Nevertheless all Cowfold had for ages said it was the Old Man's Nose; and when strangers came it was pointed out with a "don't you see, isn't it hooked, just like a nose, and that is where his spectacles might lie." But Miriam made a small revolution in Cowfold. She never would admit the likeness to a nose, but with a pleasant humour observed that it was like a *mug* upside down—"mug," it must be explained, meaning not only a drinking utensil, but in very vulgar language a human face. Cowfold gradually heard of Miriam's joke, and instantly saw that the rock was really like a mug. There was the upper part, there was the handle; the resemblance to the nose disappeared, and what was most strange, could no more be imagined. Cowfold now repeated to visitors this little bit of not very brilliant smartness, elaborating it heavily at times, till it would have become rather a weariness to the flesh, if it had not been a peculiarity of Cowfold, that it

was never tired of saying the same thing over and over again, and laughing at it perpetually.

One day a great event happened. There was a fire in the town, and the house of Mr. Cutts, the saddler, was burnt down. A week afterwards some very unpleasant rumours were abroad, and the Tacchis, with Mrs. and Mr. Cattle, and the two Misses Cattle, sat talking over them in Mr. Tacchi's parlour after supper. The Cattles were small farmers who lived about a mile out of Cowfold, on the way to Shott, but within Cowfold parish, and came to Cowfold Church.

"If," said Cattle, "they can prove as the fire broke out in three places at once, the office has got him."

"His stock," continued his wife, "to my certain knowledge, warn't worth fifty pound, for I was in the shop a fortnight ago, and says I to myself, 'What can the man have let it down like this for—who'd come here for anything; and it *did* cross my mind as it was very odd, and I went home a thinking and a thinking, but of course I never dreamed as he was so awful wicked as this."

"He was always very peculiar, mother," said the elder Miss Cattle. "Do you remember, Carry," turning to her younger sister, "how he jumped out of the hedge that Sunday evening, just as we turned down our lane. Oh my, I never had such a fright—you might have knocked me down with a straw; and he never spoke, but walked straight on."

"He might have been nutting," said Giacomo—"he was always going out nutting; and perhaps he didn't notice he had frightened you."

"Not notice! I am sure he might have done; and

then, why did he come out just then, I should like to know. If he had come out just after we'd got by, I shouldn't have thought so much of it."

"If the poor man was in the hedge, he must come out at some time, and it happened to be just then," observed Giacomo reflectively.

"Ah!" continued Carry, incapable of replying to Giacomo's philosophy, and judiciously changing her attack, "whenever you went to buy anything he never spoke up to you like—there was always an underhand look about him; and then his living alone as he did with nobody but that old woman with him."

"He always sold good leather," continued Mr. Cattle, who planted both his elbows on the table, and placed his head in his hands in a fit of abstraction, much perplexed by this apparent contradiction in Cutts's character.

"Sold good leather," retorted his wife with great sharpness, as if in contempt of her husband's stupidity; "sold good leather—of course he did. That was part of his plan to make people believe he was an honest man. Besides, if he hadn't, how could he have got rid of his stock as he did. Do you recollect," she proceeded with increasing asperity, as became a Cowfold matron, "as it was him as got up that petition for that Catchpool gal as was going to be hanged for putting her baby in the pond?"

"His father," quoth Mr. Cattle, inclining again to his wife's side, "had a glass eye, and I've heerd his mother was a Papist."

"Well," interrupted Miriam at last, "what if he did set fire to his house?"

They all looked amazed. "What if he did! what if he did!" repeated Mr. Cattle; "why, it's arson, that's all."

"Oh, that's saying the same thing over again."

"He'll be transported, that's 'what if he did,'" interposed Mrs. Cattle.

"I suppose," said Miriam, "he wanted to get money out of the Insurance Office. It was wrong, but he hasn't done much harm except to the office, and they can afford it."

They were all still more amazed, and justly, for Miriam, amongst her other peculiarities, did not comprehend how society necessarily readjusts the natural scale of reward and punishment.

"'Pon—my—word," exclaimed Mrs. Cattle, after a long pause, slowly dwelling on each syllable, "hasn't —done—much—harm; and for aught we know, in a month, or at most six weeks, he'll be tried, and then after that, in a fortnight, he may be on his way to Botany Bay. What do you think, Mr. Tacchi?"

Giacomo did not occupy the same position as his daughter. His eyes were screwed very nearly, although not quite, to the conventional angle; but he loved her, and had too much sense not to see that she was often right and Cowfold was wrong. Moreover, he enjoyed her antagonism to the Cattles, of whose intellect he had not, as a clock and barometer maker, a very high opinion. He evaded the difficulty.

"He hasn't been convicted yet."

"That's true," said Mr. Cattle, to whom, as an Englishman, the principle of not passing sentence till both sides are heard was happily familiar. It was

a great thought with him, and he re-expressed it with earnestness—"That's true enough."

But Miriam did not let them off. "I want to know if he is as bad as those contractors that father was reading about in the newspaper last week, who filled up the soldiers' boots between the soles with clay. If they hadn't been found out, the poor soldiers would have gone marching with those boots, and might have been out in the wet, and might have died."

"Ah!" retorted Miss Cattle, "that's all very well; but that isn't arson."

Miss Cattle was not quite so absurd as she seemed. The contractors' crime was not catalogued with an ugly name. It was fraud or breach of contract, and that of course made all the difference.

Miriam did not notice her antagonist's argument, but proceeded musingly—"He was never unkind. He was very good to that old woman, his aunt."

"Unkind!" Mrs. Cattle almost screamed, her harsh grating voice contrasting most unpleasantly with the low, indistinct, mellow tones in which Miriam had uttered the last two or three words. "Unkind! What's that in a man as is a going to be brought up before the 'sizes. I can see the judge a sentencing of him now."

"He may have been very poor, and may have lost all his money," continued Miriam; "anyhow, he wasn't cruel. I would sooner have hung old Scrutton, who flogged little Jack Marshall for stealing apples till his back was all covered with bloody weals."

The clocks in the shop began at that moment to strike ten in a dozen different tones, as if they discerned the hopelessness of the discussion, and were

determined to cut it short. The company consequently separated, and Miriam went to bed; but not to sleep, for before her eyes, half through the night, was sailing the ship in which she thought poor Cutts would be exiled. Let it not for a moment be supposed that Mr. Cutts was a young man, and that Miriam was in love with him. He was about fifty.

Next morning she was still more distressed. Sometimes the morning brings forgetfulness of the trouble of the day before, and at other times it revives with peculiar power just at the moment when we wake, especially if it be dark. Miriam was confused. The belief that she ought to do something if possible to help Cutts was just dawning upon her; but although she was singularly liable to be set fast to any purpose when once she had it clearly formed, it was always a long time before it became formed. She was not one of those happy persons whose thoughts are always beneath them, as the horses of a coach are beneath the driver, and can be directed this way or that way at his bidding. She could not settle beforehand that she would think upon a given subject, and step by step disentangle its difficulties, and pursue it to the end. That is the result of continuous training, and of this she had had none. Ideas passed through her mind with great rapidity, but they were spontaneous, and consequently disconnected, so that in difficulty the path was chosen without any balancing of the reasons on this and on the other side, which forced the conclusion that it was the proper path to take.

A thousand things whirled through her brain. She

had known all about Cutts before the conversation with the Cattles, or with the Cattle, as she generally called them; but the case had not struck her till they and she began to talk about it. She was in a great turmoil, and plans presented themselves to her, were discarded, and then presented themselves again as if they were quite new. The next night she slept well. More than ever was she impressed with horror at what seemed to be Cutts's certain fate—more than ever was she resolved to help him if she could; and now at last she was a little clearer, and had determined to go over to the county town and see Messrs. Mortimer, Wake, Collins and Mortimer, the solicitors in whose hands the defence lay. She did not doubt it to be her duty to go, although Cutts was no more to her than to any other person in Cowfold, and she had no notion of what she was going to say to the lawyers when she saw them. On the following morning she started, under the pretence that she wanted something she could not obtain in Cowfold. Having no mother, and being manageress in a small way at home, these trips were not unusual. Courageous as she was, when she reached the office her heart sank, and she then first remembered that she had no very solid ground for her visit. She had brooded in her bedroom over Cutts, and had thought what a grand thing it would be to save him, but when she stepped inside Messrs. Mortimer's door, and was face to face with a raised desk, protected by rails, behind which clerks were busy writing, or answering questions, her dreams disappeared; she saw what a fool she was, and she would have liked to retreat. However, it was too late, for

one of the gentlemen behind the rails asked what she wanted.

"I've come about Mr. Cutts."

"Oh yes; committed for arson at Cowfold. Sit down in that room for a few minutes. Mr. Mortimer will attend to you presently."

Miriam was shown into a little box-like den, in which there was a round, leather-covered table, with a couple of chairs, but no books, and no newspaper. She had to wait for twenty terrible minutes, in which her excitement increased to such a degree that once or twice she was on the point of rushing out past the clerks, and running back to Cowfold. But she did not do it, and after a while Mr. Mortimer entered.

"Well, Miss Tacchi, what can I do for you?" He was gentle in his behaviour, and he soothed by his first words poor Miriam's flutter.

"Oh, if you please, sir, Mr. Cutts is not guilty."

"Why not?"

"It is a cruel thing that he should suffer. He is as kind a creature as ever lived. You don't know how kind he has been to his old aunt. He always sold honest things. There are scores of people in Cowfold who deserve to be transported more than he."

"That won't help him much. Good people are a queer set sometimes. But why should *you* interfere?"

"I cannot tell," replied Miriam, her voice beginning to shake; "but I thought and I thought over it, and it is so wrong, so unfair, so wicked, and I know the poor man so well. Why should they do anything to him?" She would have proceeded in the same strain, and would have compared the iniquity of arson with

that of fraudulent contractors and the brutal Scrutton, but she checked herself. "He is not guilty," she added.

Mr. Mortimer was perplexed. He was accustomed in his profession to all kinds of concealment of motives, and he conjectured that there must be some secret of which he was unaware.

"Are you any relation?"

"No."

"Have you ever visited at his house, or has he been in the habit of calling at yours?"

"No."

He was still more perplexed. He could not comprehend, and might very well be excused for not comprehending, why the daughter of a respectable tradesman in Cowfold should walk six miles on behalf of a stranger, and be so anxious about him.

"One more question. You have had nothing whatever to do with Mr. Cutts, except by going to his shop, and by talking to him now and then as a neighbour?"

"Nothing;" and Miriam said it in such a manner, that the most hardened sceptic must have believed her.

"The fire broke out at a quarter to eight. Had you seen Cutts about that time?"

"I had met him in the street that evening as I came home."

"Where had you been?"

"Practising in the church."

"What time was it when you met him? Be careful."

Miriam now realised the importance of her answer

The exact truth was that she had reached home at half-past seven, and had seen Cutts going into his house then. It must be remembered that although, as before observed, she was naturally truthful, she was so because she was fearless, and had the instinctive tendency to directness possessed by all forceful characters. Her veracity rested on no principle. She was not like Jeanie Deans, that triumph of culture, in whom a generalisation had so far prevailed that it was able to overcome the strongest of passions and prevent a lie even to save a sister's life. Miriam had been brought up in no such divine school. She had heard that lying was wrong, but she had no religion, although she listened to a sermon once every Sunday, and consequently the relation in which the several duties and impulses stood to one another was totally different from that which was established in Sir Walter's heroine. By some strange chance, too, tradition, which often takes the place of religion, had no power over her; and although hatred of oppression and of harsh dealing is a very estimable quality, and one which will go a long way towards constructing an ethical system for us, it will not do everything.

She began to reflect. She had no watch with her. She had noticed the clocks when she returned, and she remembered that they showed half-past seven. She could not at the moment deliberately say a quarter to eight, although really it did not much matter. Who would be the worse if she declared it was a quarter to eight? Nobody, and she knew that Cutts would be the better. She had not specially observed the clocks; how could she, for she had no notion that anything

important depended upon accuracy. She was short-sighted, and she had not seen the regulator. Nothing was actually before her eyes but a great Dutch kitchen clock, which showed half-past seven, and might have been wrong. Something struck when she left the church, and the strokes chimed again in her ears as she was shaping her reply to Mr. Mortimer. They sounded like half-past, and in that case it must have been a quarter to eight when she stood on her door-step. Finally, there was the reason of reasons which superseded the necessity of any further attempt to persuade herself by any casuistry—she must save Cutts.

"A quarter to eight," she said decisively.

"Odd that you should have seen him just at that time. In less than five minutes the place was in a blaze. He could hardly have lit it up himself. Would you swear before the Court it was a quarter to eight?"

If she had been asked this at first she would have hesitated, but she now boldly said "Yes."

"Very well; I do not see what more I can do now. I will think over the matter;" and Miriam departed.

The lawyer had his suspicions, and determined, after some inquiries in Cowfold, that Miss Miriam should not be called. He told the story to his partner, who laughed, and said he did not see anything extraordinary in it. It was a common case of perjury. Mr. Mortimer was not sure that it was common perjury. Externally it might be so, and yet there seemed to be a difference. Moreover, he could not find out any-

thing in Cowfold to make him believe that there was any motive for it.

"Perfectly motiveless," he replied. "A noteworthy instance," for he was a bit of a philosopher, "of an action performed without any motive whatever. I have always maintained the possibility of such actions."

As to Miriam, she went back to Cowfold without any self-accusation or self-applause. She did not know that there was anything criminal or generous in her attempt on behalf of Cutts. We may say in parting that he was acquitted, to her great delight; and Mr. Cattle, with the pride of a British citizen who has served on a jury and knows the law, did not cease to preach to his wife, whenever the opportunity offered, that you should never pronounce the verdict till you've heard the evidence.

Soon after Mr. Cutts's return to Cowfold Mr. Tacchi one day surprised his household by telling them he meant to take another wife. Andrew was silent, but Miriam at once flew into a violent passion, and thereby greatly incensed her father. There was no cause for her anger. Mrs. Brooks, whom Giacomo had chosen, was, as the second choice often is, just the woman who was necessary to him. She was about forty, a good manager, with an equable temper, a widow, with no children, not in the least degree rigid, but, on the contrary, affectionate. She had seen some trouble with her first husband, who was a little farmer and drank, and consequently, although she was a churchwoman, had been driven to the Bible, and had found much comfort therein. "Although she was a churchwoman" may sound rather strange, but still it is a fact that in those

days in Cowfold the church people, and for that matter the Dissenters too, did not read their Bibles; but amongst the Dissenters there was here and there a remnant of the ancient type to whom the Bible was everything. Amongst the church people there were very few or none.

Why Miriam should be so wrathful with her father it is extremely difficult to say. It is certain she did not object to her deposition as housekeeper. She never cared for her duties as mistress. Perhaps one reason was that she chose to resent the apparent displacement of her own mother. She never knew her, and owed her nothing except her birth; but she was *her* mother, and she took sides with her, and considered her insulted, and became her partisan with perfect fury. Perhaps, too, Miriam was slightly jealous that her father, who was now nearing his half century, should show himself not altogether dead to love. She would have liked to find him insensible, leaving all love affairs to his children, and she once even went so far as to use the word "disgusting" in conversing with Andrew on the subject.

Giacomo, however, was very determined, notwithstanding his affection for his daughter, and disagreeable scenes took place between them. She showed her displeasure in a thousand ways, and was positively rude to Mrs. Brooks when she invited Miriam to her house.

Giacomo had a sister, a Mrs. Dabb, who lived in London. She had married a provision dealer in the Borough, and he employed not only a staff of assistants, but a couple of clerks. Mrs. Dabb, oddly enough, was

a fair-haired woman, with blue eyes and a rosy complexion. She had rather a wide, plump face, and wore her hair in ringlets. She lived at the shop, but she had a drawing-room over it with a circular table in the middle, and round it lay the "Keepsake" and "Friendship's Offering," in red silk, with Mrs. Hemans' and Mr. Montgomery's poetry. Into these she occasionally looked, and refreshed herself by comparing her intellect with that of the female kind generally. She desired above everything not to be considered commonplace, believed in love at first sight, was not altogether unfavourable to elopements, carefully repressed any tendency to unnecessary order, wore a loose dressing-gown all the morning, had her breakfast in bed, let her hair stray a little over her face, cultivated a habit of shaking it off and pushing it back with her fingers, and generally went as far to be thought a little "wild" as was possible for the wife of a respectable, solid, eminently British, close-fisted Borough tradesman. Nevertheless she had a huge appetite, and always had ham or sausages for tea. Giacomo she despised, on the ground that his occupation was so limited, that it contracted the imagination, and that he did not "live in the metropolis, but vegetated in a country town." She consequently very seldom visited Cowfold, and very seldom wrote to her brother. Giacomo, however, thought it his duty to tell his sister of his approaching marriage; and Mrs. Dabb, who was endowed with great curiosity, replied that, if it was quite agreeable, she would come to Cowfold for two or three days to make the acquaintance of Mrs. Brooks and obtain a change

of air, as she had suffered somewhat from feelings of languor of late and a little fever on the nerves. Accordingly she came, and in a short time saw what was the state of affairs between Miriam and her father. She rather liked Miriam, chiefly for her defects; and as Giacomo had been a little freer than usual with his sister one evening, and had expressed his fears that Miriam and Mrs. Brooks would not agree, Mrs. Dabb gave him some advice.

"Miriam, my dear Giacomo, is a bit of a genius, untamed and irregular, reminding me something of myself."

Giacomo did not much believe in untamed irregular genius. It was certainly of no use in clockmaking.

"Well, what then?"

"I should say that she suffers through limitation of her sphere. No suffering like that, Giacomo. Ah me!"

Mrs. Dabb shook back her hair, and put both her hands to her forehead.

"Does your head ache?"

"No; at least not more than usual. I always have a weight there; I believe it is merely ideas. I asked a very eminent young man who lives not far from us—he occupies a high position in the hospital—a dresser, I think, they call him; and he said it was due to overstrung—dear me, what was it! I remember putting it down; it seemed so exactly to coincide with my own views."

Mrs. Dabb looked in her pocket-book.

"Overstrung cerebration, that was it; overstrung cerebration."

"What were you going to say about Miriam?"

"A little proposal. My husband wants a clerk. Why not let Andrew take the place, and Miriam be his housekeeper? We have no room for them, but apartments are to be procured at a low rate."

This was in reality Miriam's scheme. She had heard of the vacancy in Mr. Dabb's establishment, and had implored her aunt to use her influence with Giacomo to gain his assent to Andrew's removal. Mrs. Dabb was not an unkind woman; she really thought she liked Miriam, and she consented. She had even gone so far as to encourage her in the belief that she "vegetated," and the word opened up to her a new world. "Vegetate"—it stuck to her, and became a motive power. Great is the power of a thought, but greater still is the power of a phrase, and it may be questioned whether phrase is not more directly responsible than thought for our religion, our politics, our philosophy, our love, our hatred, our hopes and fears.

"I do not think," said Giacomo, "they could live on a clerk's salary. Andrew would not be worth much as a beginner."

"It is astonishing, my dear Giacomo, upon how little people can live, if their wants are simple, like my own, for example; and then Andrew would have the opportunity of acquiring animal food at a cheap rate."

"I do not like the thought of parting with the children, and I fear the dangers of London, especially for a girl like Miriam."

"I would take them, Giacomo, under my wing.

Besides, as a dear friend once observed to me, evil has no power over the pure soul. I feel it myself; it cannot come near me; it dissolves, it departs. What is the Borough to me with all its snares? I am in a different world."

Giacomo for some time refused; but Miriam was alternately so unpleasant and so coaxing, that at last he consented. Poor Andrew had really no will of his own in the affair. He was a gentle, docile creature whom clockmaking suited, but he was pleased at the thought of the change, and who could tell? he might rise to a position at his uncle's far beyond anything which he could attain in Cowfold.

After some negotiation, therefore, Miriam and Andrew departed for London, the salary being fixed at thirty-eight shillings a week. To this Giacomo added twelve shillings a week—two pounds ten shillings altogether. It was a happy day for both of them when they journeyed to the end of Cowfold Lane, and waited for the coach; they were happier still when they were mounted on the top, and were at last on the great London road, and already on the line which was in direct communication with the great city. It was different altogether from the Cowfold roads, and there was a metropolitan air about it. They continually met coaches going away to York, Newcastle, and even to Edinburgh, and the drivers mutely saluted by lifting their whips as they passed. Two drivers had thus met for forty years, and had never spoken a single word to one another. At last one died, and the other took his death so much to heart that he sickened and died too. The inns were nothing like the Cowfold

inns. They were huge places, with stables like barracks, and outside each of them were relays of beautiful horses standing ready for the change. The scenery from Huntingdon to London is not particularly attractive, but to Miriam and Andrew the Alps could not have been more fascinating. They wondered that others did not share their excitement, and Andrew thought that a coachman must be the happiest of men.

At last they reached Barnet, the last stage, and immediately afterwards they saw the line of the smoke-cloud which lay over the goal of all their aspirations, the promised land in which nothing but golden romance awaited them. Presently a waypost was passed, with the words *To the West End* upon it, so that they might now be fairly said to be at least in a suburb. Ten minutes more brought them to Highgate Archway, and there, with its dome just emerging above the fog, was St. Paul's! They could hardly restrain themselves, and Miriam squeezed Andrew's hand in ecstasy. They rattled on through Islington, and made their first halt at the "Angel," astonished and speechless at the crowds of people, at the shops, and most of all at the infinity of streets branching off in all directions. Dingy Clerkenwell and Aldersgate Street were gilded with a plentiful and radiant deposit of that precious metal of which healthy youth has such an infinite store—actual metal, not the "delusive ray" by any means, for it is the most real thing in existence, more real than the bullion forks and spoons which we buy later on, when we feel we can afford them, and far more real than the silver tea-service with which,

still later, we are presented amidst cheers by our admiring friends in the ward which we represent in the Common Council, for our increasing efforts to uphold their interests.

At the Bull and Mouth they saw that marvel, the General Post Office, but they had not much time to look at it, for here they were met by a young man from Mr. Dabb. They were disappointed that Mrs. Dabb had not come, but a verbal excuse was offered that she was in bed with a headache. Mr. Dabb, of course, was too busy to leave. The messenger was commissioned to take them to their uncle's, where they were to have tea; and after tea they were to go to the lodgings which Mrs. Dabb had provisionally selected for them. In a few minutes they had crossed London Bridge, and drew up in front of Mr. Dabb's house. There was no private entrance, and they encountered their uncle on the pavement. He was short and thick, with a very florid complexion, and wore a brown jersey, and a white apron fastened at the back with a curious brass contrivance. There were two or three people with him, and he had a knife in his hand. The doors were wide open; there seemed to be no windows, and in fact Mr. Dabb's establishment was a portion of the street just a little recessed. He was in and out continually, now on the pathway talking to a customer there, and then passing inside to the ladies who were a little more genteel, and preferred to state their wants under cover. At the back of the shop was a desk perched up aloft, just big enough for one person, and with a gaslight over it. Andrew noticed it, and thought of winter, and wondered how anybody could sit there during a January

day with the snow on the ground, or during a cold thaw.

Mr. Dabb put down his knife and shook hands with them.

"Well, Mr. Andrew, so you've come to make your fortune—long hours, hard work, stick at nothing; cutting place the Borough. Better go inside. Put your traps up in that corner; you'll want 'em again directly. Aunt's abed upstairs; can't see you to-night."

They went into a little greasy back parlour, lighted by a skylight, if indeed a window could be so called whose connection with the sky was so far from being immediate.

Mr. Dabb looked in. "You'll have some tea in a minute. I myself can't leave—shorthanded."

They were not asked to wash or take off their travelling clothes.

Presently a slut of a girl appeared with a tray on which there were some ham, a shapeless mass of butter which looked as if it had been scooped out of a pot, a loaf, a teapot, some cups and saucers, a milk jug, and two plates, with knives and forks. She went to a cupboard, put a black cruet-stand on the table, and as the milk had been spilt over the bread, she took the plate to the fender, emptied it amongst the ashes, and wiped it with her apron. The apron was also used to wipe the butter plate, on which there was an unusually black mark, with lines resembling the imprint of a very big thumb. In about half-an-hour after they had refreshed themselves Uncle Dabb looked in.

"Better be off before it gets dark. Eight o'clock sharp to-morrow morning, Andrew. Sharp's the word.

Breakfast before you come. My boy will show you your quarters. Needn't take them unless you like them."

A cab was called, their luggage was put upon it, and they were landed in Nelson Square. The lodgings were three rooms at the back of the house, two of them garrets at the top, and the third a small sitting-room on the ground floor, behind the front parlour. They looked rather dismal, and Miriam inquired whether they could not have front rooms.

"Oh yes, ma'am; but they would come more expensive. Mrs. Dabb told me she didn't think you would like to pay more than thirteen shillings and sixpence a week without extras, which is exceedingly cheap for this part, and the front rooms corresponding would be five-and-twenty shillings."

This settled the question. They had fancied an outlook on a gay promenade, and they had in its place a waste expanse of dirty dull roofs and smoking chimneys. If they looked down below, they saw a series of small courtyards used for the purpose of storing refuse which could not be put in the dustbin—bottles, broken crockery, and odd bits of rusty iron. The first thing was to provide the breakfast for the following morning. This their landlady offered to do for them. The next thing was to go to bed utterly wearied and worn out. They both slept soundly, and both woke much refreshed and full of buoyant hope. A pleasant and seductive vista lay before them—seductive and pleasant, although they were in Nelson Square, as that which we see in one of Turner's Italian pictures—a temple at the side, a lake in front

and beyond it a valley embosomed in woods and mountains, basking in golden light.

They planned the day. Miriam had to lay in her stock of eatables, and of course must call on her aunt. At twenty minutes to eight Andrew started. The way was easy to find, and he was at his uncle's five minutes before his time. The shopmen were already there, and Andrew had rather a rough greeting.

"An't yer brought yer warming-pan with yer, young 'un? You'll find it cool a sittin' still all day long."

Andrew then found out that the desk up aloft was really his appointed post.

"Don't yer be so free, Bill," said the other; "he's the govnor's nevvy. You'd better mind what you're at, old man, now we've got the nevvy here."

"I suppose you'll be a pardner next week," continued the first with a bow.

The truth was that Mr. Dabb had told his men that he was expecting a nephew "of his missus's," and that "he was took on as a kind of charity like."

Mr. Dabb now appeared.

"Here you are—all right. Sharp's the word—that's my motter. Keep on your coat and hat—you'll want 'em, I can tell you. This isn't a place for coddlin', is it, Bill?" Bill smiled. "You've got to take the money—all ready money here, except a few weeklies. You get a ticket, see as you have the right amount; we keep a duplicate, and so we check you. Things as go in the books you put down. Three-quarters of an hour for your dinner and half-an-hour for tea—

not like Cowfold, eh? You'll see life here—*life*, my boy;" and Mr. Dabb, full of ham, buttered toast, and hot coffee, and feeling very well that morning, began to chop with great vigour at the spine of a dead pig suspended by its hind-legs. "Life," he said again—"there isn't such a place in London for life as the Borough; and though I say it, there aren't many more places in the Borough where there's more life than at Dabb's. Now then, mount."

Andrew assumed his new position. Fortunately for him, he was, like many other youths of his bent, rather quick at arithmetic; Mr. Dabb was not very busy, and whatever his faults may have been, was by no means disposed to be hard upon a beginner. Still the day was insufferably long, and he rejoiced with a foolish extravagance of delight when the hour came for going home. There was nothing exhilarating in the streets through which he raced: there was no certainty of anything particularly pleasant in Nelson Square, and the morrow would inevitably be as to-day. But still he was glad; and as for the morrow, he did not see it.

At three o'clock Miriam called on her aunt. As she passed through the shop she saw her brother, but it was full of people, and she could not speak to him. She found Mrs. Dabb still in bed with her nerves in disorder; other things were in disorder too, and Miriam particularly wondered at the dishevelled condition of Mrs. Dabb's hair, nightcaps being the custom at Cowfold for all people who were not girls nor boys. Miriam was not an orderly person, as we know, but Mrs. Dabb's room was a surprise to her. In one corner was an old green sofa, on which clothes were thrown; on the top

of the clothes was a tray with some half-eaten bread and butter, a piece of bacon, and some tea things—we will not, however, go any further.

"I am glad you've come, my dear," said Mrs. Dabb, "although I am afraid I shall not be able to see you so often as I could wish, for my health is not good, and when I am better there is so much to be done."

Miriam thought that if this might be true, there was no reason to put it in the forefront of the reception.

"Your brother, I believe, will do very well. It must be a great relief to him to be freed from his mechanical labours in a provincial town, and to find himself in a more extended circle."

Miriam thanked her aunt, and said that she was sure her uncle would be kind.

"Yes, he will be kind; although I should not say that kindness is the one thing prominent in him. In such large commercial undertakings the feelings are not developed. I am often sensible of it. There is no response in your uncle to what is best in me, yet I must not complain. Perhaps if we had children it might have been different, and yet who knows? Maternal solicitude might have destroyed the sentiment I now possess. But I must not weary myself by talking—I must bid you good-bye. Come again soon."

Miriam rose, ventured to kiss her aunt, and departed.

Three months passed, and Miriam and Andrew agreed that there was vegetation in London as well as in Cowfold. They began indeed to think it was even a

little greener in Cowfold than in Nelson Square itself. Miriam had been out for walks—she had been as far as Regent Street; but Regent Street began to lose its charms, especially as she had no companions. Her landlady, Miss Tippit, was a demure little person of about fifty years, but looking rather younger, for her hair was light. It was always drawn very tightly over her forehead, and with extreme precision under her ears. She invariably wore a very tight-fitting black gown, and as her lips too were somewhat tightly set, she was a very tight Miss Tippit altogether. It was necessary to be so, for beyond an annuity of £20 a year, she had no means of support save letting her lodgings. She was very good, but her goodness appeared to lack spontaneity. It seemed as if she did everything, and even bestowed her rare kisses, under instructions from her conscience, and every tendency to effusiveness was checked as a crime. Yet the truth was that she was naturally kind and even generous, but disbelieving in nature on the whole, she never would sanction any natural instinct unless she could give it the form of duty. She was an unpleasant companion at times, because she often felt bound to "set things right," and made suggestions which were resented as interference. When she visited her friends, for she had two or three, she invariably assumed the reins, and was provocative by reason of her unauthorised admonitions to the servants or remarks upon defective management. Another odd thing was that Miss Tippit was a Christian. She went to church regularly twice every Sunday, and it was always her parish church. She might have found something to do her more good if she had

gone farther afield; but she considered it her duty to go to her own church as she called it. The parson was not eminent, belonged to no school, and said nothing which was specially helpful; but Miss Tippit listened with respect, heard the Bible read, did her best to join in the hymns with her little thin voice, and prayed the church prayers. She contrived, through what she heard, and what she sang, and what she prayed, not only to provide herself with an explanation which she did not doubt of the here and hereafter—an explanation which would not probably have been secure against Strauss—but she obtained a few principles by which she regulated this present life—principles of extreme importance, which scepticism must admit if the world is not to go to ruin. In the church, too, in the corner against the wall, when the music sounded, or when the voice of the priest was heard asking for the Divine mercy, the heart of Miss Tippit often moved, notwithstanding the compression of her tight black dress, and something seemed to rebel in her throat against her bonnet-strings. What did she think in those sacred moments? Let us not profane her worship with too minute inquiry. Whatever she thought, those emotions were perfectly valid. She might be snappish, limited, and say ugly things during half the week, but there was something underneath all that which was in communication with the skies. The church was the only mental or spiritual education which Miss Tippit received. Books she never read—she had not time; and if she tried to read one she was instantly seized with a curious fidgetiness—directly she sat down with a volume in her hand it

was just as if things went all awry, and compelled her instantly to rise and adjust them. In church all this fidgetiness vanished, and no household cares intruded. It was strange, considering her temper, and how people generally carry their secular world with them wherever they go, but so it was. There was a secret in her history, her friends said, for though they knew nothing of her little bit of private religion, and although she never admitted a soul into the little oratory where the image of her Saviour hung, everybody was aware that there was "a something about her" which took her out of the class to which she externally and by much of her ordinary conduct appeared to belong, and of course the theory was an early love disappointment, the only theory which the average human intellect is capable of forming in such cases. It was utterly baseless; and Miss Tippit was touched with this faint touch of supernal grace just because her Maker had so decreed.

Miriam disliked Miss Tippit on account of her primness and old maidishness, and the frequent hints which she gave to keep her room in order. Miriam had picked up an epithet, perhaps from her aunt, perhaps from a book which seemed exactly to describe Miss Tippit — she was "conventional;" and having acquired this epithet, her antipathy to Miss Tippit increased every time she used it. It was really not coin of the realm, but gilded brass—a forgery; and the language is full of such forgeries, which we continually circulate, and worst of all, pass off upon ourselves. Thus it happened that although Miss Tippit would have been glad to do Miriam many a service, her

offers were treated with something like disdain, and were instantly withdrawn. The only other lodgers in the house were an old gentleman and his wife on the first floor, whom Miriam never saw, and about whom she knew nothing.

Andrew at last began to feel the wear of London life. When he came home in the evening he suffered from an exhaustion which he never felt in Cowfold. It was not that weariness of the muscles which was a pleasure after a game at cricket or football, but a nervous distress which craved a stimulant. He had confined himself hitherto to a single glass of beer at supper, but this was not enough, and a glass of whisky and water afterwards was added to keep company with the pipe. By degrees also he dropped into a public-house as he left Mr. Dabb's for just threepennyworth to support him on his way. Frequently when he went there he met a man of about thirty who also was apparently enjoying a modest threepennyworth to help him home or help him away from it, or help him to do something which he could not do without it, and Andrew and he began gradually, under the influence of their threepennyworths, to talk to one another. He was clean shaven, had glossy black hair, a white and somewhat sad face, was particularly neat but rather shabby, and, what at first was a puzzle to Andrew, looked as if he was going to begin work rather than leave it, for his boots were evidently just blacked. He was a music-hall comic singer. His father and mother—fathers and mothers, even the best of them, will do such things—had given him a fairish schooling, but had never

troubled themselves to train him for any occupation. They stuck their heads in the sand, believed something would turn up, and trusted in Providence. Considering the kind and quantity of trust which is placed in Providence, the most ambitious person would surely not aspire to its high office, and it may be pardoned for having laid down the inflexible rule to ignore without exception the confidence reposed in it. Poor George Montgomery found himself at eighteen without any outlook, although he was a gentleman, and his father was a clergyman. The only appointment he could procure was that of temporary clerk in the War Office during a "scare"—"a merely provisional arrangement," as the Rev. Mr. Montgomery explained, when inquiries were made after George. The scare passed away; the temporary clerks were discharged; the father died; and George, still more unfitted for any ordinary occupation, came down at last, by a path which it is not worth while to trace, to earn a living by delighting a Southwark audience nightly with his fine baritone voice, good enough for a ballad in those latitudes, and good enough indeed for something much better if it had been properly exercised under a master. He was not downright dissolute, but his experience with his father, who was weak and silly, had given him a distaste for what he called religion; and he was loose, as might be expected. Still, he was not so loose as to have lost his finer instincts altogether, for he had some. He read a good deal, mostly fiction, played the organ, and actually conducted the musical part of a service every Sunday, heathen as he was. His vagrant life

of excitement begot in him a love of liquor, which he took merely to quiet him, but unfortunately the dose required strengthening every now and then. He was mostly in debt; prided himself on not dishonouring virtuous women—a boast, nevertheless, not entirely justifiable; and through his profession had acquired a slightly histrionic manner, especially when he was reciting, an art in which he was accomplished. He found out that Andrew had a sister, and he gave him a couple of tickets for an entertainment which had been got up by some well-meaning people to draw the poor to his church. They were tickets for the respectable end of the schoolroom, and Andrew having obtained permission to leave an hour earlier, took Miriam in her very best dress, and with one or two little additional and specially purchased articles of finery. It never entered Mr. Montgomery's head to invite even Andrew to the music hall. He was ashamed of it, and he saw that Andrew was not exactly the person to be taken there. Mr. Montgomery had two classes of songs, both of which found favour with his ordinary nightly audience. One was coarse, and the other sentimental.

Of the coarse, his always applauded "Hampstead-Heath Donkey and what he thought of his Customers" might be taken as a sample, but there was just as vigorous clapping when he produced his "Sackmaker's Dream," and this he now sang. Miriam was much affected by it, and dwelt upon it as the three—the singer, Andrew, and herself—walked home to their lodgings whither Mr. Montgomery had been invited to supper.

"Did you write the Sackmaker's Dream yourself?" she asked, as they went along.

"Yes; just by way of a change. It does not pay to sing nothing but comic stuff."

"It is very pathetic. Is it true?"

"Oh, I don't quite know. Founded on fact, as they say, dressed up a bit by the author," and Mr. Montgomery laughed.

"But how did *you* ever hear of such a thing?"

"Oh, I've heard a good many strange things since I've been knocking about town."

"Then you had some particular person in your eye when you were composing it?"

"Yes, partly, but not much of her," and Mr. Montgomery laughed again.

"How much?"

"How inquisitive you are. Well, to tell you the truth, no more than this, that one night I saw one of these women coming out of a sack factory. She looked awfully wretched, and I made up all the rest."

Miriam was much astonished. She was actually in company with an author, and with one who could invent scenes, descriptions, and characters like those in the novels of which she was now so fond. Mr. Montgomery was a marvel to her. He, too, was somewhat struck with Miriam; with her beauty, and with a certain freshness in her observations; but a man who had lived as he had lived in London is not likely to admire any woman with much fervour, and indeed the incapacity for genuine admiration of women is one of the strongest arguments against such a life.

They had their supper, and after supper some

whisky was produced, and Andrew and Montgomery smoked.

"Talking about sackmakers," said Montgomery, "I can tell you a true story of one, quite true, every word of it. I knew a fellow who had been awfully wild when he was young, but he was converted, as they call it, and turned city missionary. He came to know in this way one of these sackmaking women. She was above the usual run, well-behaved, and very good-looking. He fell desperately in love with her, and she with him, but he always thought she held back a little. At last she told him she had lived with a man, and that he had left her. The missionary said he did not care, and would marry her, but she refused. She was bound, she said, and nothing could get that notion out of her head. The missionary was in despair; he was trained for foreign service, and went to India. There he married, well enough, I was told, and was happy; but the sackmaker was never forgotten. He became the minister of a big chapel in Calcutta, but he always somehow, through somebody in London, managed to find out what the girl was doing. When he was forty-five, his wife died. They had no children, and he came back to England. One fine morning he knocked at his old friend's door. You may imagine their meeting! The man with whom she had lived was dead. The missionary and she were married. He gave up his preaching; he had saved up a bit of money, and took his wife and himself off to America. What do you think of her, Andrew?"

Andrew's notions on social and moral questions were what are commonly called "views." They were not

thoughts, and furthermore they were "average views." Having had some whisky, his views were very average —that is to say, precisely what is usual and customary. "I suppose it was the best thing he could do," he somewhat sleepily replied.

"The best thing he could do!" retorted Miriam, with much scorn. "I would have worn that woman like a jewel, if I had been her husband. He ought never to have married his first wife."

Six months afterwards, the position of affairs in the little household in Nelson Square had changed. Andrew, finding that vegetation in London was very slow work, had contracted the habit of taking whisky a little more frequently, and had even—not unnoticed by Mr. Dabb—provided himself with a small flask, from which he was accustomed to solace himself by "nips" during business hours when he thought he was not seen. Once or twice he had been late in the morning, and had been reminded by Mr. Dabb. "Sharp's the word in my establishment, nephew, and I show no favour."

Mr. Montgomery, too, had become a constant visitor at the Tacchis' on Sunday, and Miriam had found herself beginning on the Monday morning to count the hours till the next Sunday should arrive. She had told Mr. Montgomery that she should like to hear him sing in his own hall, but he did not receive the proposal very graciously.

"They are a rough set that go there, and you would not like to mix with them."

"If you do not mind, why should I? Besides, could you not find some place apart where Andrew and myself could be quiet?"

"You would object to some of the songs; they are not adapted for your ears."

"You know nothing about my ears. I do not suppose there will be anything wrong. Come now, promise."

Mr. Montgomery thought a little, and reflected that he could easily obtain a secluded seat; and as for the programme, he could perhaps for once exclude everything offensive. He said he would write and fix an evening.

"Andrew is out all day; perhaps you had better send the note to me, so that I may have more time to make arrangements." Miriam usually said what she meant; but this was not what she meant. She was possessed now by a passion which was stronger than her tendency to speak the truth. She longed for the pleasure of a letter to herself in Mr. Montgomery's own writing. The next morning, when she went downstairs, she looked anxiously at the breakfast table. It was utterly impossible that he could have written, but she thought there was a chance. She listened for the postman's knock all day, but nothing came. How could it be otherwise, seeing that Mr. Montgomery must go to the music hall first. She knew he must go, and yet she listened. Reason has so little to do with the conduct of life, even in situations in which its claim is incontestable. The next day she had a right to expect, but she expected in vain.

Mr. Montgomery was not a stone, but he saw no reason why he should be in a hurry. Miriam was a bewitching creature, but he had been frequently be-

witched, and had recovered. The notion, of course, that he was wrecking Miriam's peace of mind by delaying a little business note, or by omitting to fix the earliest possible moment for the visit, was too absurd to present itself to him. At last he wrote, telling Miss Tacchi that he hoped to have the pleasure of seeing her and Andrew at the hall on the day following. He would call for them both. Miriam had not stirred from home since she last saw him, and was in the little back room when the letter arrived. Miss Tippit brought it to her, and she took it with an affected air of total unconcern.

"Thank you, Miss Tippit. I am sorry to see you looking so poorly."

"Thank you, Miss Tacchi; I am not well by any means," and Miss Tippit departed.

Miriam had not latterly inquired after Miss Tippit's health, but being excited and happy, she not only inquired, but actually felt a genuine interest in Miss Tippit's welfare. She read the note twice—there was nothing in it; but she took it upstairs and read it again in her bedroom, and finally locked it up in her desk, putting it in a little secret drawer which opened with a spring. She had in her possession something in his hand—she was going out with him; and the outlook from her back window over the tiles was not to be surpassed by that down a Devonshire glen in midsummer, with Devonshire azure on the sea.

The evening came, and Mr. Montgomery called before Andrew had arrived. Miriam was, nevertheless, ready. She asked him if he would like anything; could she get him any tea? But he had prepared himself for

his night's work by a drop of whisky, and did not care for tea. He did not, however, suggest any more whisky; he was always indeed particularly careful not to overstep the mark before his performances, whatever he might do afterwards.

"Really, Mr. Montgomery, this is too kind of you to take the trouble to come here out of your way for Andrew and myself."

"It is not out of my way, Miss Tacchi, and I do not believe that you can honestly say that I, who have been idling about for three or four hours, could find it a trouble to be here."

"Do you think I deal in hypocritical compliments?"

"Of course not; but we are all of us liars a little bit—women more than men; and perhaps they are never so delightful as when they are telling their little bits of falsehoods. They speak the truth, but they *do* lie—truth and lie, lie and truth—the truest truth, the most lying lie;" and Mr. Montgomery took up a couple of wax ornamental apples which were on the mantelpiece and tossed them up alternately with one hand with the greatest dexterity, replacing them on the mantelpiece with a smile.

At that moment Andrew appeared at the door, and in a few moments they were all three ready. Just as they were departing, a gentleman came downstairs.

"Pardon me," he said, speaking to Miriam, "do you live in this house?"

"Yes."

"Miss Tippit is very dangerously ill. I am her

doctor. I do not like to leave her alone with the little girl. I am going to fetch a nurse, and will probably be able to get one in an hour. Do you mind waiting till I return?"

Miriam was almost beside herself. She was not simply vexed, but she cursed Miss Tippit, and would have raged at her if the presence of others had not restrained her.

"It is extremely awkward. I have a most pressing engagement."

Andrew stared. He did not see anything particularly pressing.

"I will wait for you, Miriam."

She now hated Andrew as much as she did Miss Tippit.

"Absurd to talk of waiting. You know nothing about it. Go on. Don't stay for me. Of course I must give it up altogether;" and she clutched at her bonnet-strings, and tore her bonnet off her head. The doctor was amazed, and doubted for a moment whether it would not be better to do without her help.

"It doesn't matter, Miss Tacchi," said Mr. Montgomery; "I shall not be on for an hour and a half, but I must be there. If you will come with your brother, you will be in plenty of time."

She sullenly went upstairs, and Andrew remained below. When she entered the room she shut the door with some vehemence, and the little maid-of-all-work, who was at the head of the bed, came to meet her.

"Oh, if you please, Miss Tacchi, the doctor said she

was to be kept so quiet. Poor Miss Tippit; she is very bad, Miss; I think she's insensible."

"You need not tell me what to do. I know just as well as yourself."

The sufferer lay perfectly still, and apparently unconscious. Miriam looked at her for a moment and felt rebuked, but went and sat by the fire.

"I don't mind doing anything for her," she said to herself, "although she is no particular friend of mine, and not a person whom it is a pleasure to assist; but I really don't know whether, in justice to myself and Andrew, I ought to remain, seeing how seldom we get a chance of enjoying ourselves, and how important a change is for both of us."

There is no person whom we can more easily deceive —no, not even the silliest gull—than ourselves. We are always perfectly willing to deny ourselves to any extent, or even to ruin ourselves, but unfortunately it does not seem right we should do so. It is not selfishness, but a moral obligation which intervenes.

The man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves was left half-dead. The priest and the Levite, who came and looked and passed by on the other side, assuredly convinced themselves that most likely the swooning wretch was not alive. They were on most important professional errands. *Ought* they to run the risk of entirely upsetting those solemn engagements by incurring the Levitical penalty of contact with a corpse? There was but a mere chance that they could do any good. This person was entirely unknown to them; his life might not be worth saving, for he might be a rascal; and, on the other hand, there

were sacred duties—duties to their God. What priest or Levite, with proper religious instincts, could possibly hesitate?

Was the Miriam who chafed at her disappointment, and invented casuistical arguments to excuse herself, the same Miriam who walked over to see Mortimer, Wake, and Collins on behalf of Mr. Cutts? Precisely the same.

The doctor kept his engagement, and in an hour returned with a nurse. When Miriam saw she was relieved, she became compassionate.

"I am so grieved," she said to the doctor, "to see Miss Tippit so ill. Is there really *nothing* I can do for her?"

"Nothing, madam."

Miriam, so grieved, rushed downstairs wild with excitement and delight, laid hold of Andrew, half asleep, twitched him merrily out of the chair, and they were off. In a few minutes they were at the hall, and found that they were in ample time to hear Mr. Montgomery's first song.

He had taken particular care not to include anything offensive or even broad, so that one of his audience who sat below Miriam and Andrew exclaimed in their hearing that it was "a d—d pious night," and wondered "what Mont's little game was."

One of Mr. Montgomery's most telling serious songs was sung in the costume of a sailor. There was a description of his wanderings over the "salt, salt sea," which rhymed with something "free," as it always does, and there was a slightly veiled account of his exploits amongst the damsels of different countries,

always harmless, so at least ran the version for the night, and yet he swore when he returned that

> "My lovely Poll at Portsmouth,
> When in my arms I caught her,
> Was worth a hundred foreign gals
> On the t'other side the water"—

a sentiment which was tumultuously applauded, although few of the men present had travelled, and those who were married were probably not so rapturously in love with their own domestic Polls.

Andrew was not quite comfortable, but Miriam applauded with the rest.

"How cleverly," she said, "he manages, although he is a gentleman born and bred, to adapt himself to the people beneath him. It is a pity, though, that he hasn't a better sphere for his talents."

When they came out, Mr. Montgomery accompanied them home; and as it was night, and the streets were crowded with rather rough and disorderly persons, he offered Miriam his arm, Andrew walking on the other side of her.

"I was half ashamed, Miss Tacchi, that you should see me go through such a performance."

"There was nothing objectionable in it; and for that matter, we all have to do what we do not quite like. I am sure it was very good of you to let us come, and I enjoyed myself very much. By the way, when you sing any of the songs which are not comic, do you feel them? I often wonder if a professional gentleman who can produce such an effect on others, produces anything like the same effect on himself."

"It depends upon the mood. Do you know now that when I was singing to-night that stupid thing about the sailor and his Portsmouth Poll, it all at once came to my mind that no Portsmouth Poll would ever wait for me. Did you ever hear anything so ridiculously absurd—such a bit of maudlin nonsense. I laughed at myself afterwards. It gave me a good idea, though. I'll compose a burlesque, and the refrain shall be, weeping—

"No Po-o-ortsmouth Poll is a-waiting for me."

"I don't think it was absurd," said Miriam gravely.

"You don't?" he replied, in a suddenly changed tone.

"No."

"The path is rather narrow here; you had better come a little closer." He took her hand, and pulled her arm a little further through his own. Was it fancy or not? He thought he detected that the pressure on his arm was increased. When they reached Nelson Square they had supper, and after supper Andrew and Montgomery, according to custom, enjoyed themselves over the tobacco and whisky. Miriam knew well enough, long before they separated, that it was time for Andrew at least to go to bed, but she was unwilling to break up the party. At last, when it was past one, Mr. Montgomery rose. Andrew had had more whisky than was good for him, and Miriam went with their guest to the door. He had a strong head, and could drink a good deal of liquor without confusing it, but liquor altered him

nevertheless. To-night it made him more serious, and yet, strangely enough, strengthened the evil tendency in him to cross his seriousness with instantaneous levity. He was much given to mocking his own emotions, not only to others, but to himself. When the door opened, he looked out into the night, and if there had been a lamp there Miriam would have seen that for a moment his face was very sad, but he at once recovered, or seemed to recover.

"Ah, well, I must be off. It is dark, it is late, and it rains, and alas

"No Po-o-ortsmouth Poll is a-waiting for me."

Miriam was silent. She pitied him profoundly, and thought it was nothing but pity.

"Good-bye, Miss Tacchi."

He took her hand in his, held it a little longer than was necessary for an ordinary farewell, then raised it to his lips and kissed it. She did not at once release him. "Good-bye," she said. He had moved a little farther from her, and was descending the step, but the hands still held. One more "good-bye," and they slowly parted their grasp, as things part under a strain which are not in simple contact, but intermingle their fibres.

Mr. Montgomery in a quarter of an hour was at home, and in another quarter of an hour was asleep. Miriam, on the contrary, lay awake till daylight, with her brain on fire, and when she woke it was nine o'clock. Coming downstairs as soon as she was dressed, she was greatly surprised to find that Andrew was still in bed. She was much alarmed, went to his

room, and roused him. He complained of headache and sickness, and wished to remain at home for the day, but Miriam would not listen to it—rather unwisely, for it would have been better if he had not appeared before Mr. Dabb that morning. Mr. Dabb had in fact been much provoked of late by small irregularities in Andrew's attendance, and had at last made up his mind that on the next occasion he would tell him, notwithstanding their relationship, that his services were no longer required.

"Nice time to show yourself, Mr. Andrew," observed Mr. Dabb, pulling out his watch.

"I was not well."

"I've got a word or two to say to you. Perhaps we'd better go into the parlour."

Thither Mr. Dabb went, and Andrew followed him.

"Look you here, Mr. Andrew, I know perfectly well what is the matter with you. You don't think that I haven't got a nose, do you? You are my nephew, but just for that very reason you shan't be with me. I'm not agoing to have it said that I've got a relative in my business who drinks. I won't turn you out into the street, as I might have done, with nothing but what was due to you. There's two months' pay, and now we're quits. You take my advice, and let this be a lesson to you, or you'll go from bad to worse."

Mr. Dabb produced the money, and handed it to Andrew. He was confounded, and almost dumb with terror. At last he found words, and implored his uncle to forgive him.

"Forgive you? Yes, I forgive you, if that will do you any good; but business is business, and what I've

settled to do that I do. Now, then, you'd better go; I can't stand here any longer. I don't bear any ill-will to you, but it's of no use your talking."

He opened the door, and in another minute Andrew was in the street.

Miriam heard his story. She had anticipated it, and for the moment she said nothing. Her first care was to prevent her uncle or aunt from communicating with Cowfold. She foresaw that her father, if he knew her brother's disgrace, might possibly stop the allowance. She at once put on her bonnet and called at the shop. She made no appeal for reconsideration of the sentence—all she asked was that there should be silence. To this Uncle Dabb assented willingly, for Miriam was half a favourite with him, and he even went so far as somewhat to apologise for what he had done.

"But you know," said he, "this is a shop. As I have told him over and over again, business is business. I couldn't help it, and it's just as well as he should have a sharpish lesson at first—nothing like that for curing a man."

Mr. Dabb unfortunately did not know how much it takes to cure a man of anything.

Miriam felt it would be graceless not to see her aunt, although she had no particular desire for an interview just then.

"My dear Miriam," began that lady, without waiting for a word, "I do regret so what has happened. I am so sorry I could not prevent it, but I never interfere in your uncle's commercial transactions, and reciprocally he never intrudes into my sphere. It is

most unfortunate—what do you think we can do to arrest this propensity in your brother?"

Miriam was silent.

"It is astonishing how much may be done by cultivating the finer emotions. Your brother has always seemed to me not sufficiently susceptible. Supposing I were to lend you a book of my favourite poetry, and you were to read to him, and endeavour to excite an interest in him for higher and better things—who knows?"

Miriam had no special professional acquaintance with the theory of salvation, but she instinctively felt that a love of drink was not to be put down by the "Keepsake" in red silk.

She was still silent. At last she said—"I am much obliged to you, aunt; I will take anything you may like to lend. You have a good deal of influence, doubtless, over uncle. If you can persuade him to say what he can in case application is made to him for a character, I shall think it very kind of you."

"My dear Miriam, I have no influence over your uncle. His is not a nature upon which I can exert myself. I think some pieces in this would be suitable;" and Mrs. Dabb offered Miriam a volume of Mrs. Hemans' works.

Miriam took it, and bade her aunt good-bye.

She was now face to face with a great trouble, and she had to encounter it alone, and with no weapons and with no armour save those which Nature provides. She was not specially an exile from civilisation; churches and philosophers had striven and demonstrated for thousands of years, and yet she was no better protected

than if Socrates, Epictetus, and all ecclesiastical establishments from the time of Moses had never existed.

She did not lecture her brother, for she had no materials for a sermon. She called him a fool when she came home; and having said this, she had nothing more to say, except to ask him bitterly what he meant to do. What could he do?—a poor, helpless, weak creature, half a stranger in London; and without expostulating with her for her roughness with him, he sat still and cried. It was useless to think of obtaining a situation like the one he had lost. He could prove no experience, he dared not refer to his uncle, and consequently there was nothing before him but a return to clockmaking, or rather clock repairing. Here again, however, he was foiled, for his apprenticeship was barely concluded, and he had never taken to the business with sufficient seriousness to become proficient. After one or two inquiries, therefore, he found that in this department also he was useless.

The affection of Miriam for her brother, never very strong, was not increased by his ill-luck. She began, in fact, to dislike him because he was unfortunate. She imagined that her dislike was due to his faults, and every now and then she abused him for them; but his faults would have been forgotten if he had been prosperous. She hated misery, and not only misery in the abstract, but miserable weak creatures. She was ready enough, as we have seen, to right a wrong, especially if the wrong was championed by those whom she despised; but for simple infirmity, at least in human beings, she had no more mercy than

the wild animals which destroy any one of their tribe whom they find disabled. There was more than a chance, too, that Andrew would interfere with her own happiness. If he could not get anything to do, they must leave London, for living on the allowance from Cowfold was impossible. Reproof, when it is mixed with personal hostility, although the person reproving and the person reproved may be unconscious of it, is never persuasive; and as a tendency to whisky and water requires a very powerful antidote, it is not surprising that Andrew grew rather worse than better.

One evening Montgomery called. He had come to ask them both to the hall. He was in a very quiet, rational humour, for he had not as yet had his threepennyworth. Andrew had been out all day, had come home none the better for his excursion, and had gone to bed.

"Your brother not at home?"

"Yes; but he is not very well, and is upstairs."

"I've brought you a couple of tickets for next week. I hope you will be able to go; that is to say, if you were not disgusted when you were last there."

"Disgusted! I am afraid, Mr. Montgomery, you have a very poor opinion of my 'gusts' and disgusts."

It was unfortunate for Miriam that she had no work before her, such as sewing or knitting. She abominated it; but in conversation, especially between a man and a woman who find themselves alone, it is useful. It not only relieves awkwardness, but it prevents too much edge and directness during the interview.

"Well, you might reasonably have been offended with both the songs and the company."

"Neither. As to the company, I did not see much of it, thanks to your kindness in getting us such a good place; and as to the songs, to say nothing of the way in which they were sung, there was a straightforwardness about them that I liked.

"I don't quite know what you mean."

"Well," said Miriam, with a little laugh, which was not exactly the light effervescence of gaiety, "your people, if they love one another, say so outright, without any roundaboutness."

Mr. Montgomery was puzzled. He did not quite know what to make out of this girl. There was something in her way of speaking and in her frankness which offered itself to him, and yet again there was something which stopped him from attempting any liberties. She did not classify herself in any of the species with which he was familiar.

At last he said—"You object, then, to all roundaboutness in such matters."

"Well, yes; but perhaps I might be misunderstood. I should like people to be plain both ways, about their dislikes as well as their likes."

"Good gracious me, Miss Tacchi, what a pretty world you would live in. There would be no fun in it. Half the amusement of life consists in trying to find out what we really think of one another underneath all our fine speeches."

"I would rather amuse myself in some other way. I have often dreamt of an island in which everybody should say *exactly* what was in his mind. Of course

it would be very shocking, but I do really believe that in the end we should be happier. It would be delightful to me if my cousins were to tell me, 'We hate you—you are dirty, disagreeable, and ugly; and we do not intend to call upon you any more.' For mind, people would then believe in expressions of affection. They do not believe in them now."

"Yes; your island would be all very well for attractive young women, but what would it be for poor devils such as I am. I *know* that nobody can care twopence for me, but the illusion of politeness is pleasant. It is a wonderful thing how we enjoy being cheated, though we know we are cheated. A man will give a cabman sixpence more than his fare for the humbug of a compliment, and I confess that if people were to say to my face what I am certain they say behind my back, I should hang myself. Illusion, delusion—delusion, illusion," he hummed it as if it were the refrain of a ballad; "it is nothing but that from the day we are born till the day we die, and the older we become the more preposterously are we deluded, until at last—but the Lord—to think of preaching," and he laughed—"you must have made me do it;" and he rose and played with his favourite toys, the wax apples, pitching them up to the ceiling alternately and catching them in one hand. "I must be off."

Miriam did not appear to take any notice.

"Pray," said he, "if you lived in this island of which you dream, would you tell me you hated me? I am beginning to be rather nervous."

"We are not living in it just yet."

"But in one just as disagreeable, for it is pouring with rain."

Miriam gave a sudden start. She unconsciously looked that the conversation would prolong itself in the same interior strain. Reference to the outside world was impossible to her just then, and that Mr. Montgomery was capable of it was a shock like that of cold water. She came to herself, and went to the window.

"Must you go out in this storm?"

"Must; and what is more, I haven't got a minute to spare. I may take it for granted, then, you and Andrew will come."

"Yes, certainly."

He hastily put on his coat; shook hands—nothing more—and was off.

Miriam ran upstairs into her bedroom, went to the little box in which she kept her treasures, unlocked it, took out the little note—the only note she had ever had from him—read it again and again, and then tore it into twenty pieces, each one of which she picked up and tried to put together. She then threw herself on the bed, and for the first time in her life was overcome with hysterical tears. She dared not confess to herself what she wanted. She would have liked to cast herself at his feet; but notwithstanding her disbelief in form and ceremony, she could not do it. She cursed the check which had held her so straitly while she was talking with him, and cursed him that he dealt with her so lightly. The continued sobbing at last took the heat out of her, and she rose from her bed, collected

the pieces of the note, went downstairs, and put them one by one deliberately in the fire.

It was time now that they should seriously consider how they stood. Andrew had nothing to do, and the wages paid him in advance were nearly exhausted. They decided that they would move into cheaper lodgings. They had some difficulty in finding any that were decent, but they obtained three miserable rooms at the top of a house occupied by a man who sold firewood and potatoes in one of the streets running out of the Blackfriars Road. They left Miss Tippit without bidding her good-bye, for she was still unwell, and in bed. They actually began to know what poverty was, but Miriam as yet did not feel its approach. There were thoughts and hopes in her which protected her against all apprehension of the future, although the cloud into which they must almost inevitably enter was so immediately in front of her.

The evening came on which she and Andrew were to go to the hall, but Andrew had gone out early to look for some employment, and had not returned. Miriam's hatred rose again, and again assumed an outward garb of the purest virtue. She sat for some time in rapid debate with herself as to what she dare do. Even she recoiled a little from going to a music hall without her brother, but passion prevailed. She did not simply determine to go knowing it to be wrong, but with great earnestness demonstrated to herself that she was right; and then, as a kind of sop to any lingering suspicions, left a note on the mantelpiece for Andrew, upbraiding him for delay, and direct-

ing him to follow. No Andrew appeared. She now began to feel how strange her position was. She might easily before she started have conjectured that Andrew might fail, and might have pictured to herself how difficult and awkward it would be to sit there throughout the evening alone and return alone; but she did not possess the faculty of picturing uncertainties any distance ahead, although the present was generally so vivid. She could never say to herself: "Probably this arrangement now proposed will break down, and if it does, I shall stand in such and such a situation; what, in that situation, ought I to do?" She had, in fact, no strategical faculty—certainly none when temptation was strong. She dreaded turning out into the street with the rough crowd, and she wondered if Montgomery would come to her assistance. The audience gradually departed; she was nearly the last, and she determined that she would walk round to the door by which she knew Montgomery usually left, and try to encounter him casually. She paced up and down a few moments, and he met her. He was much surprised, and she, with some excitement, explained to him that she had left home a little before Andrew, expecting him to overtake her, but that she had seen nothing of him.

"Of course you will let me accompany you to your lodgings?"

"Thank you; it is very kind of you."

She took the arm he offered her. She thought she detected he was a little unsteady, and after a word or two he became silent.

She was not particularly well acquainted with the

district round the hall, but she soon perceived that they were not on the straight road for her house.

"Is this our nearest way?" she asked.

"No, I can't say it is; but I thought you would not object to just a turn round. It's a lovely night—a lovely night!"

Presently they came into a very shabby street, and he stopped. The cold air had begun to upset him a little.

"These are my quarters," he stammered. "I'm rather tired, and I should think you must be tired too. Just come in for a moment and have something, and then we will go on."

"Oh no, thank you," said Miriam, who was becoming alarmed. "I must go back at once."

"Won't you come? Do come; just a moment."

But Miriam steadfastly refused.

"Nonsense, come in just for a second till I——" and he used some little force to compel her. She looked round, and without any mental process of which she was conscious determining her to action, instantly slipped from him, and ran with furious haste. She inquired her way of a policeman, but otherwise she saw nothing, thought nothing, and heard nothing till she was at her own door. She opened it softly—it was late; she went into their little parlour, and there lay Andrew on the floor. He had fallen against the fender, his head was cut open, and he was senseless. A half empty whisky bottle told the rest of the story. There was nobody stirring—her landlord and landlady were strangers; if she called them, and they saw what was the matter, she might have summary notice to quit. What was she to do? She took some cold

water, washed his face, unfastened his neckcloth, and sat down. She imagined it was nothing but intoxication, and that in a few hours at most he would recover. So she remained through the dreadful night hearing every quarter strike, hearing chance noises in the general quietude, a drunken man, a belated cart, and worse than anything, the slow awakening between four and five, the whistle of some early workman who has to light the engine fire or get the factory ready for starting at six—sounds which remind the sleepless watcher that happiness after rest is abroad.

She hid the whisky bottle and glass; and as her brother showed no signs of recovery, she went to seek advice and help as soon as she heard somebody stirring. The woman of the house, not a bad kind of woman, although Miriam had feared her so much, came upstairs instantly. Andrew was lifted on the bed, and a messenger was despatched for the doctor. Miriam recognised him at once: he was the doctor who had asked her to stay with Miss Tippit. He said there was concussion of the brain—that the patient must be kept quiet, and watched night and day. To her surprise, her landlady instantly offered to share the duty with her. A rude, stout, hard person she was, who stood in the shop all day long, winter and summer, amidst the potatoes and firewood, with a woollen shawl round her neck and over her shoulders. A rude, stout, hard person, we say, was Mrs. Joll, fond of her beer, rather grimy, given to quarrel a little with her husband, could use strong language at times, had the defects which might be supposed to arise from constant traffic with the inhabitants of the Borough, and was utterly unin-

telligent so far as book learning went. Nevertheless she was well read in departments more important perhaps than books in the conduct of human life, and in her there was the one thing needful—the one thing which, if ever there is to be a Judgment Day, will put her on the right hand; when all sorts of scientific people, religious people, students of poetry, people with exquisite emotions, will go on the left and be damned everlastingly. Miriam was at once sent to bed, and it was arranged that she should take charge during the following night. Afterwards the night duty was to fall equally between them. She was so shut up in herself that she did not recognise the full value of Mrs. Joll's self-sacrifice, but she did manage to express her thanks, and ask how Mrs. Joll could leave the business.

"That's nothing to you, Miss; my gal Maud has a head on her shoulders, and can keep an eye on the place downstairs. Besides, I've allus found that at a pinch things will bear a lot of squeezing. I remember when my good man were laid up with the low fever for six weeks, and I had a baby a month old, I thought to myself as I should be beaten; but Lord, I was young then, and didn't know how much squeezing things will take, and I just squeezed through somehow."

"He ain't very strong, is he?" continued Mrs. Joll. "I don't mean in his constitution, but here," and she tapped her head. "Likes a drop or two now and then?"

Miriam was silent.

"Ah! well, as I said about Joll's brother when I was a-nussing of him—he was rather a bad lot—it's nothing to me when people are ill what they are. Besides, there ain't so much difference 'twixt any of us."

The night came. Miriam rose and went down to her brother's room. She tried to read, but she could not, and her thoughts were incessantly occupied with her own troubles. Andrew lay stretched before her—he might be dying for aught she knew; and yet the prospect of his death disturbed her only so far as it interfered with herself. Montgomery was for ever in her mind. What was he that he should set the soul of this girl alight! He was nothing, but she was something, and he had by some curious and altogether unaccountable quality managed to wake her slumbering forces.

She was in love with him, but it was not desire alone which had fired her, and made her pace up and down Andrew's sick chamber. Thousands of men with the blackest hair, the most piercing eyes, might have passed before her, and she would have remained unmoved. Neither was it love as some select souls understand it. She did not know what it was which stirred her; she was hungry, mad, she could not tell why. Nobody could have predicted beforehand that Montgomery was the man to act upon this girl so miraculously—nobody could tell, seeing the two together, what it was in him which specially excited her—nobody who has made men and women his study would have wasted much time in the inquiry, knowing that the affinities, attractions, and repulsions of men and women are beyond all our science.

Brutally selfish is love, although so heroically self-sacrificing. Miriam thought that if Andrew had not been such an idiot, the relationship with Montgomery might have remained undisturbed. He might still have continued to call, but how could she see him

now? The sufferer lay there unconscious, pleading for pity, as everything lifeless or unconscious seems to plead—no dead dog in a kennel fails to be tragic; but Miriam actually hated her brother, and cursed him in her heart as a stone over which she had stumbled in the pursuit of something madly coveted but flying before her.

It was midnight. She went to the window and looked out. The public-houses were being closed, and intoxicated or half-intoxicated persons were groping their way homewards. Suddenly she caught sight of one man whom she thought she recognised. He was with a woman, and his arm was round her waist. Softly she opened the window, and as it was only one story high, she caught a full view of him as he came under the gaslight. It was Montgomery beyond a doubt. He reeled just a trifle, and slowly disappeared in the gloom. The moment he had passed she was not quite sure it was he. She went downstairs in the dark, having taken off her shoes to prevent any noise. She put on her shoes again, drew back the bolts softly, left the door upon the latch, and crept out into the street. Swiftly she walked, and in a few moments she was within half-a-dozen yards of those whom she followed. She could not help being sure now. She continued on their track, her whole existence absorbed in one single burning point, until she saw the pair disappear into a house which she did not know. She stood stock still, till a policeman was close upon her, and roused her from her reverie; and then hardly knowing what she was doing, she went home, and returned to her room. Every interest which

she had in life had been allowed to die under the shadow of this one. Every thought had taken one direction—everything had been bitter or sweet by reference to one object alone; and this gone, there followed utter collapse. She had no friends, and probably if she had known any they would have been of little use to her, for hers was a nature requiring comfort of a stronger kind than that which most friends can supply. It was unfortunate, and yet she was spared that aggravation of torture which is inflicted by people who offer vague commonplaces, or what they call "hopes;" she was spared also that savage disappointment to which many are doomed who in their trouble find that all philosophy fails them, and the books on their shelves look so impotent, so beside the mark, that they narrowly escape being pitched into the fire.

Andrew began to recover slowly, but he could do no work, and Miriam had to think about some employment for herself in order to prevent deeper immersion in debt. It was very difficult to find anything for a girl who had been brought up to no trade; but at last, through the kindness of her landlady, she obtained second-hand an introduction to the manager of an immense drapery firm which did a large business through circulars sent all over the country. Miriam was employed in addressing the circulars. It was work which she could do at home, and by writing incessantly for about seven hours a day she could earn twelve shillings a week. The occupation was detestable, and it was with the greatest difficulty that she could persevere with it; but after some time it ceased to be quite so repulsive.

Her relief, however, was the relief of stupefaction and not of reconciliation. Sorrow took the form of revolt. It had always been so with her whenever anything was the matter with her: it was the sense of wrong which made it so intolerable. What had she done, she said to herself a hundred times a day, that she should have been betrayed into wretched poverty, that she should have been deserted, and that her fortunes should have been linked with those of an imbecile brother.

Andrew was still very weak—he could hardly speak; and as he lay there impassive, Miriam's hatred of his silent white face increased. She had too much self-control to express herself; but at times she was almost on the point of breaking out, of storming at him, and asking him whether he had no pity for her. One night, as she sat brooding at the window, and her trouble seemed almost too much for her, and she thought she must give way under it, a barrel organ stopped and began playing a melody from an opera by Verdi. The lovely air wound its way into Miriam's heart; but it did not console her. It only increased her self-sympathy. She listened till she could listen no longer, and putting her hands over her ears she rested her head upon the table, and was overcome with unconquerable emotion. Poor Andrew stared at her, utterly incapable of comprehending the scene. When she had recovered, he quietly asked her what was the matter.

"Matter!" she cried. "I don't believe you understand or care any more than the bedstead on which you lie," and she rose and flung herself out of the house. In those days there was, perhaps there is now,

a path — it could not be called a road — from the southern end of London Bridge to Bankside. It went past St. Saviour's Church, and then trending towards the river, dived, scarcely four feet wide, underneath some mill or mill offices, skirting a little dock which ran up between the mill walls. Barges sometimes lay moored in this dock, and discharged into the warehouses which towered above it. The path then emerged into a dark trench between lofty buildings connected overhead with bridges, and finally appeared in Bankside amidst heaps of old iron and broken glass, the two principal articles of merchandise in those parts. A dismal, most depressing region, one on which the sun never shone, gloomy on the brightest day. It was impossible to enter it without feeling an instantaneous check to all lightness of heart. The spirits were smitten as if with paralysis directly St. Saviour's was passed. Thither went Miriam aimlessly that night; and when she reached the dock, the temptation presented itself to her with fearful force to throw herself in it and be at rest. Usually in our troubles there is a prospect of an untried resource which may afford relief, or a glimmer of a distance which we may possibly reach, and where we may find peace, but for Miriam there was no distance, no reserve: this was her first acquaintance with an experience not rare, alas! but below it humanity cannot go, when all life ebbs from us, when we stretch out our arms in vain, when there is no God—nothing but a brazen Moloch, worse than the Satan of theology ten thousand times, because it is dead. A Satan we might conquer, or at least we should feel the delight of combat

in resisting him; but what can we do against this leaden "order of things" which makes our nerves ministers of madness? Miriam did not know that her misery was partly a London misery, due to the change from fresh air and wholesome living to foul air and unnatural living. If she had known it, it would not have helped her. She could not have believed it, for it is the peculiarity of certain physical disorders that their physical character does not appear, and that they disguise themselves under purely mental shapes. Montgomery, her brother, the desperate outlook in the future, it is true, were real; but her lack of health was the lens which magnified her suffering into hideous dimensions. The desire to get rid of it by one sudden plunge was strong upon her, and the friendly hand which at the nick of time intervenes in romances did not rescue her. Nevertheless, she held back and passed on. Afterwards the thought that she had been close to suicide was for months a new terror. She was unaware that the distance between us and dreadful crimes is much greater often than it appears to be. The man who looks on a woman with adulterous desire has already committed adultery in his heart if he be restrained only by force or fear of detection; but if the restraint, although he may not be conscious of it, is self-imposed, he is not guilty. Nay, even the dread of consequences is a motive of sufficient respectability to make a large difference between the sinfulness of mere lust and that of its fulfilment. No friendly hand, we say, interrupted her purpose, but she went on her way. Hardly had she reached the open quay, when there came a

peal of thunder. In London the gradual approach of a thunderstorm working up from a long distance is not perceived, and the suddenness of the roar for a moment startled her. But from her childhood she had always shown a strange liking to watch a thunderstorm, and, if possible, to be in it. It was her habit, when others were alarmed and covered their eyes, to go close to the window in order to see the lightning, and once she had been caught actually outside the door peering round the corner, because the strength of the tempest lay in that direction. The rain in an instant came down in torrents, the flashes were incessant, and flamed round the golden cross of St. Paul's nearly opposite to her. She took off her bonnet and prayed that she might be struck, and so released with no sin and no pain. She was not heard; a bolt descended within a few feet of her, blinding her, but it fell upon a crane, passed harmlessly down the chain into a lot of rusty old scrap, and so spent itself. She remained standing there alone and unnoticed, for the street was swept clear as if by grapeshot of the very few persons who might otherwise have been in it at that hour. Gradually the tumult ceased, and was succeeded by a steady, dull downpour; Miriam then put on her bonnet and walked home.

The next day she was ill, unaccountably feverish and in great pain. Hers was one of those natures—happy natures, it may perhaps be said—which hasten always to a crisis. She had nothing of that miserable temperament which is never either better or worse, and remains clouded with slow disease for months or years. She managed to do her work, but on the following

morning she was delirious. She remembered nothing more till one afternoon when she seemed to wake. She looked up, and whose face was that which bent over her? It was Miss Tippit's. Miss Tippit had learned through the doctor what was the state of affairs, and had managed, notwithstanding the demand which the lodgings made upon her, to take her share in watching over the sufferer. Her stepmother had been summoned from Cowfold, and these two, with the landlady, had tended her and had brought her back to life. In an instant the scene in Miss Tippit's room when she was sick passed through Miriam's brain, and she sobbed piteously, lifted up her arms as if to clasp her heroic benefactor, but the thought was too great for her, and she fainted. Nevertheless she was recovering, and when she came to herself again, Miss Tippit was ready with the intervention of some trifle to distract her attention. As her strength returned she was able to talk a little, and her first question was—

"Miss Tippit, why did you come here? Oh, if you but knew! What claim have I on you?"

"Hush, my dear; those days are past. You did not love me then perhaps; but what of that? I am sure you will not mind my saying it: 'If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?' But I know you did love me really."

"Where is Andrew?"

"Quite well, at home in Cowfold."

That was as much as Miriam could stand then. For weeks to come she was well-nigh drained of all vitality, and it flowed into her gradually and with

many relapses. The doctor thought she ought to be moved into the country. Mrs. Tacchi had some friends in one of the villages lying by the side of the Avon in Wiltshire, just where that part of Salisbury Plain on which stands Stonehenge slopes down to the river. Miriam knew nothing of the history of the Amesbury valley, but she was sensible—as who must not be?—to its exquisite beauty and the delicacy of the contrasts between the downs and the richly-foliaged fields through which the Avon winds. It is a chalk river, clear as a chalk river always is if unpolluted; the downs are chalk, and though they are wide-sweeping and treeless, save for clusters of beech here and there on the heights, the dale with its water, meadows, cattle, and dense woods, so different from the uplands above them, is in peculiar and lovely harmony with them.

One day she contrived to reach Stonehenge. She was driven there by the farmer with whom she was staying, and she asked to be left there while he went forward. He was to fetch her when he returned. It was a clear but grey day, and she sat outside the outer circle on the turf looking northwards over the almost illimitable expanse. She had been told as much as is known about that mysterious monument,—that it had been built ages before any record, and that not only were the names of the builders forgotten, but their purpose in building it was forgotten too. She was oppressed with a sense of her own nothingness and the nothingness of man. If those who raised that temple had so utterly passed away, for how long would the memory of her existence last? Stonehenge itself too would pass. The wind and the rain had

already worn perhaps half of it, and the place that now knows it will know it no more save by vague tradition, which also will be extinguished.

Suddenly, and without any apparent connection with what had gone before, and indeed in contrast with it, it came into Miriam's mind that she must do something for her fellow-creatures. How came it there? Who can tell? Anyhow, there was this idea in the soul of Miriam Tacchi that morning.

The next question was, What could she do? There was one thing she could do, and she could not go astray in doing it. Whatever may be wrong or mistaken, it cannot be wrong or a mistake to wait upon the sick and ease their misery. She knew, however, that she could not take up the task without training, and she belonged to no church or association which could assist her. Perhaps one of the best recommendations of the Catholic Church was that it held out a hand to men who, having for some reason or other, learned to hold their lives lightly, were candidates for the service of humanity—men for whom death had no terrors—by whom it was even courted, and who were willing therefore to wait upon the plague-smitten, or to carry the Cross amongst wild and savage tribes. Those who are skilled in quibbling may say that neither in the case of the Catholic missionary nor in that of the Sister of Mercy is there any particular merit. What they do is done not from any pure desire for man's welfare, but because there is no healthy passion for enjoyment. Nothing is idler than disputes about the motives to virtuous deeds or the proportion of praise to be

assigned to the doers of them. It is a common criticism that a sweet temper deserves no commendation, because the blessed possessor of it is naturally sweet-tempered, and undergoes no terrible struggle in order to say the sweet word which he who is cursed with spite only just manages to force himself to utter. What we are bound to praise or blame, however, is the result, and the result only—just as we praise or blame perfect or imperfect flowers. If it comes to a remorseless probing of motives, there are none of us who can escape a charge of selfishness; and, in fact, a perfectly *abstract* disinterestedness is a mere logical and impossible figment.

To revert to what was said a moment ago, it may be urged that no sufficient cause is shown for Miriam's determination. What had she undergone? A little poverty, a little love affair, a little sickness. But what brought Paul to the disciples at Damascus? A light in the sky and a vision. What intensity of light, what brilliancy of vision, would be sufficient to change the belief and the character of a modern man of the world or a professional politician? Paul had that in him which could be altered by the pathetic words of the Crucified One, "I am He whom thou persecutest." The man of the world or the politician would evade an appeal from the heaven of heavens, backed by the glory of seraphim and archangel. Miriam had a vitality, a susceptibility or fluidity of character—call it what you will—which did not need great provocation. There are some mortals on this earth to whom nothing more than a certain summer morning very early, or a certain chance idea in a lane ages ago, or

a certain glance from a fellow-creature dead for years, has been the Incarnation, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, or the Descent of the Holy Ghost.

A man now old and nearing his end is known to Miriam's biographer, who one Sunday November afternoon, when he was but twenty years old, met a woman in a London street and looked in her face. Neither he nor she stopped for an instant; he looked in her face, passed on, and never saw her again. He married, had children, who now have children, but that woman's face has never left him, and the colours of the portrait which hangs in his soul's oratory are as vivid as ever. A thousand times has he appealed to it; a thousand times has it sat in judgment; and a thousand times has its sacred beauty redeemed him.

Miriam wrote to Miss Tippit expressing her newly-formed wish. Miss Tippit, with some doubts as to her friend's fitness for the duty, promised to do what she could; and at last, after complete recovery, Miriam was allowed to begin a kind of apprenticeship to the art of nursing in a small hospital, recommended by Miss Tippit's friend, the doctor. One morning, a bright day in June, she was taken there. When the door opened, there was disclosed a long white room with beds on either side, and a broad passage down the middle. The walls were relieved by a few illuminated sentences, scriptural and secular; women dressed in a blue uniform were moving about noiselessly, and one of the physicians on the staff, with some students or assistants, was standing beside a patient happily unconscious, and demonstrating that he could not live. Round one of the beds a screen

was drawn; Miriam did not quite know what it meant, but she guessed and shuddered. She passed on to a little room at the end, and here she was introduced to her new mistress, the lady-superintendent. She was a small, well-formed woman of about thirty, with a pale thin face, lightish brown hair, grey eyes, and thinnish lips. She also was dressed in uniform, but with a precision and grace which showed that though the material might be the same as that used by her underlings, it was made up at the West End. She was evidently born to command, as little women often are. It was impossible to be five minutes in her company without being affected by her domination. Her very clothes felt it, for not a rebellious wrinkle or crease dared to show itself. The nurses came to her almost every moment for directions, which were given with brevity and clearness, and obeyed with the utmost deference. The furniture was like that of a yacht, very compact, scrupulously clean, and very handy. There was a complete apparatus for instantaneously making tea, a luxurious little arm-chair specially made for its owner, a minute writing-case, and, for decorations, there were dainty and delicate water-colours. Half-a-dozen books lay about, a novel or two of the best kind, and two or three volumes of poems.

"You wish to become a nurse?" said Miss Dashwood.

"Yes."

"I am afraid you hardly know what it is, and that when you do know you will find it very disagreeable. So many young women come here with entirely false notions as to their duties."

Miriam was silent; Miss Dashwood's manner depressed her.

"However, you can try. You will have to begin at the very bottom. I always insist on this with my probationers. It teaches them how the work ought to be done, and, in addition, proper habits of subordination. For three months you will have to scrub the floors and assist in keeping the wards in order."

Miriam had imagined that she would at once be asked to watch over grateful patients, to give them medicine, and read to them. However, she was determined to go through with her project, and she assented. The next morning saw her in coarse clothes, busy with a pail and soap and water. It was very hard. She was not a Catholic novice; she was not penetrated with the great religious idea that, done in the service of the Master, all work is alike in dignity; she had, in fact, no religion whatever, and she was confronted with a trial severe even to an enthusiast received into a nunnery with all the pomp of a gorgeous ritual and sustained by the faith of ages.

Specially troublesome was her new employment to Miriam, because she was by nature so unmethodical and careless. Perhaps there are no habits so hard to overcome as those of general looseness and want of system. They are often associated with abundance of energy. The corners are not shirked through fatigue, but there is an unaccountable persistency in avoiding them, which resolution and preaching are alike unable to conquer. The root of the inconsistency is a desire speedily to achieve results. To keep this desire in subjection, to shut the eyes to results, but

patiently to remove the dust to the last atom of it lying in the dark angle, is a good part of self-culture.

In a hospital Miriam's defect was one of the deadly sins, and many were the admonitions which she received from Miss Dashwood. One evening, after a day in which they had been more frequent than usual, she went to bed, but lay awake. She was obliged to confess to herself that the light of three months ago, which had then shone round her great design, had faded. To conceive such a design is one thing, to go down on the knees and scour floors week after week is something different.

She did not intend, however, to give up. When she rose in the morning she looked out over the London tiles and through the smoke with a miserable sinking of heart, hoping, if she hoped for anything, for the end of the day, and still more for the end of life; but still she persevered, and determined to persevere.

One day a new case came into the ward. It was evidently serious. A man returning home late at night, drunk or nearly so, had fallen under a cart in crossing a road and had been terribly crushed. He had received some injury to the head and was unconscious. Miriam, to whom such events were now tolerably familiar, took no particular notice until her work brought her near the bed, and then she saw to her amazement and horror that the poor wretch was Montgomery. Instantly all that had slumbered in her, as fire slumbers in grey ashes, broke out into flame. She continually crept as well as she could towards him, and listened for any remark which might be dropped by nurse or doctor upon his con-

dition. Three days afterwards he died, without having once regained his reason save just one hour before death. He then opened his eyes—they fell upon Miriam; he knew her, and with a faint kind of astonishment muttered her name. Before she could come close to him he had gone.

Another month passed, and as Miriam's constitutional failings showed no sign of mitigation, Miss Dashwood found herself obliged to take serious notice of them. The experienced, professional superintendent knew perfectly well that the smart, neat, methodical girl, with no motive in her but the desire of succeeding and earning a good living, was worth a dozen who were self-sacrificing but not soldierly. One morning, after Miss Dashwood's patience had been more than usually tried, she sent for Miriam, and kindly but firmly told her that she was unsuitable for a hospital and must prepare to leave. She was not taken by surprise; she had said the same thing to herself a dozen times before; but when it was made certain to her by another person, it sounded differently.

She sought her friend Miss Tippit. To Miss Tippit the experience was not new. She had herself in her humble way imagined schemes of usefulness, which were broken through personal unfitness; she knew how at last the man who thinks he will conquer a continent has to be content with the conquest of his own kitchen-garden, fifty feet by twenty. She knew this in her own humble way, although her ambition, so far from being continental, had never extended even to a parish. She, however, could do Miriam no good. She had learned how to vanquish

her own trouble, but she was powerless against the very same trouble in another person. She had the sense, too, for she was no bigot, to see her helplessness, and she gave Miriam the best of all advice—to go home to Cowfold. Alpine air, Italian cities, would perhaps have been better, but as these were impossible, Cowfold was the next best. Perhaps the worst effect of great cities, at any rate of English cities, is not the poverty they create and the misery which it brings, but the mental mischief which is wrought, often unconsciously, by their dreariness and darkness. In Pimlico or Bethnal Green a man might have a fortune given him, and it would not stir him to so much gratitude as an orange if he were living on the South Downs, and the peculiar sourness of modern democracy is due perhaps to deficiency of oxygen and sunlight. Miriam had no objection to return. She was beaten and indifferent; her father and mother wrote to welcome her, and she recollected her mother's devotion to her when she was ill. She had not the heart to travel by the road on which she and Andrew came to London, and she chose a longer route by which she was brought to a point about ten miles from Cowfold. She found affection and peace, and Andrew, who had lost his taste for whisky, was quietly at work in his father's shop at his old trade. There was at the same time no vacant space for her in the household. There was nothing particular for her to do, and after a while, when the novelty of return had worn off, she grew weary, and longed unconsciously for something on which fully to exercise her useless strength.

In Cowfold at that time dwelt a basketmaker named

Didymus Farrow. Why he was called Didymus is a very simple story.

His mother had once heard a sermon preached by a bishop from the text, "Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with Him." The preacher enlarged on the blessed privilege offered by our Lord, and observed how happy he should have been—how happy all his dear brethren in Christ would have been, if the same privilege had been extended to them. But, alas! God had not so decreed. When the day arrived on which they would see their Master in glory, they could then assure Him, and He would believe them, how willingly they would have borne His cross—aye, and even have hung with Him on the fatal tree.

Some weeks before Didymus Farrow was born, Mrs. Farrow remembered the bishop and part of his discourse, but what she remembered most distinctly was, "Thomas, which is called Didymus." These words were borne in upon her, she said, and accordingly the son was baptized Didymus. When he grew up, he entered upon his father's trade, which was that of making the willow hampers for fruit-growers, of whom there were a good many round Cowfold, and who sent their fruit to London, stacked high on huge broad-wheeled waggons. Didymus also manufactured hand-baskets, all kinds of willow ware and white wood goods. He had a peculiar aptitude for the lathe, and some of his bread-plates were really as neatly executed as any that could be seen in London. He had even turned in poplar some vases, which found their way to a drawing-master, and were used as models.

He was now about thirty, had yellow hair, blue eyes, a smiling face, widish mouth, always a little open, nose a little turned up, whistled a good deal, and walked with a peculiar dance-like lilt. He was a gay, innocent creature, honest in all his dealings, and fairly prosperous. He had been married early, but had lost his wife when he was about twenty-six, and had been left with one daughter, whom his sister had in charge. The sister was about to be married, and when her brother knew that the day for her departure was fixed, it came into his head that he ought to be married again. Otherwise, who could manage his house and his family?

He was not a man to seek any recondite reasons for doing or not doing anything. He was not in the habit of pausing before he acted, and demanding the production of every conceivable argument, yea or nay, and then with toil adjusting the balance between them. If a lot of withies looked cheap, he bought them straightway, and did not defer the bargain for weeks till he could ascertain if he could get them cheaper elsewhere.

Going home one evening, he passed his friend Giacomo's shop, and through the window saw Miriam talking to her father. Instantly it struck him that Miriam was the girl for him, and he began to whistle the air to "Hark the Lark," for he was a member of the Cowfold Glee Club, and sang alto. This was on the 25th May. Miriam being accustomed to walk in the fields in the evening, and Mr. D. Farrow being fully aware of her custom, he met her on the 26th, and after some preliminary skirmishing requested her

to take him for better or for worse. She was surprised, but did not say so, and asked time for consideration. She did consider, but consideration availed nothing. It is so seldom even at the most important moments that our faculties are permitted fully to help us. There is no free space allowed, and we are dragged hither and thither by a swarm of temporary impulses. The result has to stand, fixed for ever, but the operative forces which determine it are those of the moment, and not of eternity. Miriam, moreover, just then lacked the strong instinct which mercifully for us so often takes us in hand. She was not altogether unhappy, but dull and careless as to what became of her. No oracle advised her. There is now no pillar of cloud or of fire to guide mortals; the heavenly apparition does not appear even in extremities; and consequently a week afterwards she said yes, and six months afterwards she was Mrs. Farrow.

For some time the day went pleasantly enough. She had plenty to do as mistress of the house, and in entertaining the new friends who came to see her. After a while, when the novelty had worn off, the old insuperable feeling of monotony returned, more particularly in the evening. Mr. Farrow never went near a public-house, but he never opened a book, and during the winter, when the garden was closed, amused himself with an accordion, or in practising his part in a catch, or in cutting with a penknife curious little wooden chairs and tables. This mode of passing the time was entertaining enough to him, but not so to Miriam, who was fatally deficient, as so many of her countrymen and countrywomen are,

in that lightness which distinguishes the French or the Italians, and would have enabled her, had she been so fortunately endowed with it, to sit by the fire and prattle innocently to her husband, whatever he might be doing. When she came to her new abode and was turning out the corners, she discovered upstairs in a cupboard a number of brown-looking old books, which had not been touched for many a long day. Amongst them were Rollin's Ancient History, some of Swift's Works with pages torn out, doubtless those which some impatiently clean creature had justly considered too filthy for perusal. There were also Paul and Virginia, Dryden's Virgil, Robinson Crusoe, and above all a Shakespeare. Miriam had never been much of a reader; but now, having nothing better to do, she looked into these books, and generally brought one downstairs in the afternoon. Swift she did not quite understand, and he frightened her; she never, in fact, got through anything but Gulliver and the Tale of a Tub; but some of his sayings stuck to her and came up against her again and again, until, like most of us who have had even a glimpse of the dark and dreadful caverns in that man's soul, she wished that he had never been born. For years, even to the day of her death, the poison of one sentence in the Tale of a Tub remained with her—those memorable words that "happiness is a perpetual possession of being well deceived." Yet she pitied him; who does not pity him? Who is there in English history who excites and deserves profounder pity?

Of all her treasures, however, the one which produced the deepest impression on her was "Romeo and

Juliet." She saw there the possibilities of love. For the first time she became fully aware of what she could have been. One evening she sat as in a trance. Cowfold had departed; she was on the balcony in Verona, Romeo was below. She leaned over and whispered to him—

> "My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
> My love as deep: the more I give to thee,
> The more I have, for both are infinite."

She went on; the day was breaking; she heard the parting—

> "Farewell! farewell! one kiss and I'll descend."

Her arms were round his neck with an ecstasy of passion; he was going; the morning star was flashing before the sun, and she cried after him—

> "Art thou gone so? love, lord, ay husband, friend!
> I must hear from thee every day in the hour,
> For in a minute there are many days."

Ah, God! what is the count of all the men and women whom, since it was first "plaid publiquely with great applause," this tragedy has reminded of the *what might have been!*

Mr. Didymus Farrow, during his wife's absence in Verona, had been very much engaged in whittling a monkey which toppled over on a long pole, but being dissatisfied with its performance he had taken his accordion out of the box, and, just as Lady Capulet called, he struck up "Down amongst the dead men," which, whatever its merit may be, is not particularly well adapted to that instrument. Verona and Romeo were straightway replaced by Cowfold and the Cowfold

consort. He was in the best of spirits, and he stooped down just as his wife was waking, took the cat—which was lying before the fire—and threw it on her lap.

"Oh, please do not!" she exclaimed, a little angry, shocked, and sad.

"I wish you would not sit and addle your brains over those books. Blessed if I don't burn them all! What good do they do? Why don't you talk?"

"I've nothing particular to say."

"You never have anything to say when you've been reading. Now if I read a bit of the newspaper, I've always something to talk about."

She was silent, and her husband continued his tune.

"Miriam, my dear, you aren't well. Are you in pain?"

Mr. Farrow never understood any suffering unless it was an ache of some kind.

"Let me get you just a drop of brandy with some ginger in it."

"No, thank you."

"Yes, you will have just a drop," and he jumped up at once and went to the cupboard.

"I tell you I will not."

The "not" came out with such emphasis that he desisted and sat down. The monkey lay on the table, the accordion lay there too; Mr. Farrow stopped his whistling and sat back in his chair with his finger to his mouth. At last, he took up the book, turned it over, and put it down again. He loved his wife after his fashion, and could not bear to see anybody distressed. He placed his chair beside hers, and

lifting her arm, put it round his neck, she nothing resisting.

"Tell me now, there's a dear, what's the matter," and he kissed her.

"Nothing," she said, somewhat softened by his caresses.

"That's right, my twopenny," a name he used confidentially to her. "A little faint; the room is rather close," and he opened the window a trifle at the top, returning to his seat, and embracing her again.

Yet, though she yielded, it was not Mr. Farrow who held her in his arms; she purposely strove to think an imaginary Romeo's head was on her neck—his face was something like the face of Montgomery—and she kept up the illusion all that night. When she came down to breakfast and sat opposite her husband, it struck her suddenly that she had cheated him and was a sinner.

In the afternoon she went out for a stroll through the streets, and up to the monument in the park. Cowfold was busy, for it was market-day. Sheep-pens were in the square full of sheep, and men were purchasing them and picking them out as they were sold; dogs were barking; the wandering dealer who pitched his earthenware van at the corner was ringing his plates together to prove them indestructible; old Madge Campion, who sold gooseberry-tarts and hot mutton-pies on her board under an awning supported by clothes-props, was surrounded by a shoal of children as happy as the sunshine; the man with the panorama was exhibiting, at one halfpenny a

head, the murder of Lord William Russell to a string of boys and girls who mounted the stool in turn to look through the glasses; and the cheapjack was expatiating on the merits of cutlery, pictures, fire-irons, and proving that his brass candlestick, honestly-worth-ten-shillings-but-obtainable-at-one-and-fourpence-because-he-really-could-not-cart-it-about-any-longer, answered the double purpose of a candlestick and burglar-alarm by reason of the tremendous click of the spring, which anybody might—if they liked—mistake for a pistol.

Through all the crowd Miriam walked unsympathetic. She cursed the constitution with which she was born. She wished she had been endowed with that same blessed thoughtlessness, and that she could be taken out of herself with an interest in pigs, pie-dishes, and Cowfold affairs generally. She went on up to her favourite resting-place; everything was so still, and her eye wandered over the illimitable distance but without pleasure. She recollected that she had an engagement; that two cousins of her husband were coming to tea, and she slowly returned. At half-past five they appeared. They chattered away merrily with Mr. Farrow, who was as lively as they were, until by degrees Miriam's silence began to operate, and they grew dull. Tea being over, she managed to escape, and as she went upstairs she heard the laughter recommence, for it was she who had suppressed it. Lying down in her room overhead, the noise continued, and it came into her mind that wherever she went she cast a cold shadow. "They must wish me dead," she thought.

She had been married so short a time; to what a dreary length the future stretched before her, and she did not love the man she had chosen, as she understood love. How was life to be lived? She did not reproach herself. If she could have done that, if she could have accused herself of deliberate self-betrayal, it would have been better; but she seemed to have been blindfolded, and led by some unknown force into the position in which she found herself.

For some days she went on with her books, but the more she read the more miserable she became, because there was nobody with whom she could interchange what she thought about them. She was alarmed at last to find that something very much like hatred to her husband was beginning to develop itself. She was alarmed because she was too much of an Englishwoman to cherish the thought of any desperate remedy, such as separation; and yet the prospect of increasing aversion, which appeared to grow she knew not how, terrified her. One Monday afternoon she had gone out to her usual haunt in the park, and near the monument she saw somebody whom she presently recognised to be Mr. Armstrong, the vicar of Marston-Cocking, a village about four miles from Cowfold. She knew him because he had dealt with her husband, and she had met him in the shop. Marston-Cocking was really nothing better than a hamlet, with a little grey squat church with a little square tower. Adjoining the churchyard was Mr. Armstrong's house. It was not by any means a model parsonage. It was a very plain affair of red brick with a door in the middle, a window with outside shutters on either side, and one

story above. There was a small garden in front, protected from the road by white palings and a row of laurels. At the back was a bigger garden, and behind that an orchard. It had one recommendation, worth to its tenant all the beauty of a moss-covered manse in Devonshire, and that was its openness. It was on a little sandy hill. For some unaccountable reason there was a patch of sand in that part of the country, delicious, bright, cheerful yellow and brown sand, lifting itself into little cliffs here and there, pierced with the holes of the sand-martin. It exhaled no fogs, and was never dull even on a November day, when the clay-lands five miles away breathed a vapour which lay blue and heavy on the furrows, and the miry paths, retaining in their sullenness for weeks the impress of every footmark, almost pulled the boots off the feet as you walked along them. At Marston, on the contrary, the rain disappeared in an hour; and the landscape always seemed in the depths of winter to retain something of summer sunshine. The vicarage was open, open to every wind, and from the top rooms the stars could be seen to rise and set, no trees intercepting the view. Mr. Armstrong was a man of sixty, a widower with no children. His income from his living was about two hundred pounds annually, and the number of his parishioners all told, men, women, and children, was, as nearly as may be, two hundred. He had been at Marston-Cocking for thirty-five years. He came just after his wife died—how he hardly knew. The living was offered him; he thought the change would do him good, although he did not intend to remain; but there he had stayed, and there was no chance of his removal. He

was completely out of the world, troubled himself with no church controversies, and preached little short sermons telling his congregation not to tell lies nor be unkind to one another. Every now and then he introduced into his discourses his one favourite subject, astronomy, and by degrees the labourers in Marston-Cocking knew more about the sky and its daily and nightly changes than many a highly educated person in the city. Mr. Armstrong, otherwise a very plain, simple creature, always grew eloquent on the common ignorance of the heavens. "Here," he would say, "has God thrust upon us these marvellous sights. These are not the secrets hidden in the mine—they are forced upon us; and yet we walk with our heads to the earth; we do not know the morning star when we see it, nor can we even recognise the Pleiads and Arcturus which Job knew." Mr. Armstrong had made all his instruments with his own hands, and had even used the top of the church-tower as an observatory. Mrs. Bullen, the wife of the one farmer in the parish, a lady who wrote the finest of Italian pointed hands, who had been in a Brighton boarding-school for ten years, and had been through "Keith on the Use of the Globes," was much scandalised at this "appropriation of the sacred edifice to secular purposes," as she called it, but she met with no encouragement. The poor people somehow connected heaven with the stars, and Mr. Armstrong never undeceived them, so that they saw nothing improper in the big telescope under the weathercock.

"Really, James," said Mrs. Bullen one morning to Mr. Armstrong's gardener and general man-of-all-

work as he was carrying a chair from the house into the tower, "do you think this is quite right? Do you think our Saviour would have sanctioned the erection of a profane instrument over the house of prayer?"

James was very thick-headed, and hardly knew the meaning of these long words, but he did not like Mrs. Bullen, and he resented her talking to him, a servant, in that strain about his master.

"Ah! Mrs. Bullen, you needn't bother yourself. He's all right with the Saviour,—more so nor many other people, maybe."

"Well, but, James, this is a church consecrated to the service of God."

"Ah! how do you know? Very likely o' nights—for he's up there when you're abed and asleep—he's a looking into heaven through that there glass, and sees God and the blessed angels."

"Really, James, can you be so ignorant as not to know that God is a Spirit? I am astonished at you." And Mrs. Bullen passed on without a single doubt in her mind that there was a single weak spot in her creed, or that anybody could question its intelligibility and coherence who would not also question the multiplication-table. She told her husband when she got home that it was really dreadful to think that the poor had such low views of the Divine Being. How degraded! No wonder they were so immoral. Bullen, however, did not trouble himself much about these matters. He assented to what his wife said, but then he called "spirit" "sperrit," to her annoyance, and she could not get him to comprehend what she

meant by "entirely immaterial," although it was so plain.

Mr. Armstrong, as we have said, was in front of Miriam. He had brought a small telescope to that point to be tested, for exactly eight miles away was a church-tower with a clock, and he wished to see if he could tell the time by it. Miriam was about to avoid him, but he recognised her and beckoned to her.

"Ah! Mrs. Farrow, is it you? Would you like to look through my glass?"

He adjusted it for her, and she saw the hour quite plainly.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "that is wonderful!"

"Yes, it is pretty well. We will now put him in his box. For the box I have to thank Mr. Farrow. He is one of the neatest hands at that kind of work I know, although it is not exactly his trade. I never was much of a joiner."

Miriam was a little surprised. She knew that her husband was clever with his tools, but she had never set any value on his labours. Now, however, she was really struck with the well-polished mahogany and the piece of brass neatly let into the lid, and when she heard Mr. Armstrong's praises she began to think a little differently.

"Ah!" he continued, "it is so difficult now to get anybody to take any interest in such a job as that. I have got another box at home made by a professed cabinetmaker, and it is really disgraceful. It will never be right, although I have had it altered two or three times. When it was shut it caught the object-glass inside. I remedied that defect, but only to

create a worse, for then the instrument shook about. So it is, when once a thing is badly done, you had better get rid of it; it is of no use to bother with it. You may depend upon it, it is not bad just here or there, but is bad all through, and the attempt to mend it serves no other purpose than to bring to light hidden weakness. On the other hand, if you are fortunate enough to have work done like Mr. Farrow's, it is perfect all through. You can never surprise it, so to speak. Just look at it. Look at that green baize rest. There is not the thirty-second part of an inch to spare on either side, and the lid comes down so evenly that you can hardly see where the edge is. Shake the box, and you will not feel a single movement. You have never seen my big telescope at Marston?"

"No."

"Well, if you like, you can come over with your husband any bright night, and I shall be happy to show it to you."

Miriam thanked him, and they parted.

A few days afterwards Mrs. and Mr. Farrow presented themselves at the vicarage. It was a lovely evening, and so clear that the outline of the constellations was obscured by the multitude of small stars, which usually are not seen, or seen but imperfectly. In the south was Jupiter, mild, magnificent, like a god amongst the crowd of lesser divinities.

Mr. Armstrong, with all the ardour of an enthusiast for his science, began a little preliminary lecture.

"I am not going to let you peep simply in order to astonish you. I abominate what are called popular lectures for that very reason. If you can be made to

understand the apparent revolution of the heavens, that is better than all speculation. To understand is the great thing, not to gape. Now I assume you know that the earth goes round on its axis, and that consequently the stars seem to revolve round the earth. But the great difficulty is to realise *how* they go round, because the axis is not upright, nor yet horizontal, but inclined, and points to that star up there, the pole-star. Consequently the stars describe circles which are not at right angles with the horizon, nor yet parallel to it. That is my first lesson."

Mr. Farrow comprehended without the slightest difficulty, but Miriam could not. She had noticed that some of the stars appear in the east and disappear in the west, but beyond that she had not gone. Mr. Armstrong continued—

"The next thing you have to bear in mind is that the planets move about amongst the stars. Just think! They go round the sun, and so do we. The times of their revolution are not coincident with ours, and their path is sometimes forwards and sometimes backwards. Suppose we were in the centre of the planetary system, all these irregularities would disappear; but we are outside, and therefore it looks so complicated."

Again Mr. Farrow comprehended, but to Miriam it was all dark.

"Now," continued Mr. Armstrong, "these are the two great truths which I wish you not simply to acknowledge, but to *feel*. If you can once from your own observation *realise* the way the stars revolve—why some near the pole never set—why some never

rise, and why Venus is seen both before the sun and after it—you will have done yourselves more real good than if you were to dream for years of immeasurable distances, and what is beyond and beyond and beyond, and all that nonsense. The great beauty of astronomy is not what is incomprehensible in it, but its comprehensibility—its geometrical exactitude. Now you may look."

Miriam looked first. Jupiter was in the field. She could not suppress a momentary exclamation of astonished ecstasy at the spectacle. While she watched, Mr. Armstrong told her something about the mighty orb. He pointed out the satellites, contrasted the size of Jupiter with that of the earth, and explained to her the distances at which parts of the planet are from each other as compared with those of New Zealand and America from London. But what affected her most was to see Jupiter's solemn, still movement, and she gazed and gazed, utterly absorbed, until at last he had disappeared. The stars had passed thus before her eyes ever since she had been born, but what was so familiar had never before been emphasised or put in a frame, and consequently had never produced its due effect.

Afterwards Mr. Farrow had his turn, and Mr. Armstrong then observed that they had had enough; that it was getting late, but that he hoped they would come again. They started homewards, but their teacher remained solitary till far beyond midnight at his lonely post. The hamlet lay asleep beneath him in profoundest peace. His study had a strange fascination for him. He never wrote anything about it; he never

set himself up as a professional expert; he could not preach much about it; most of what he acquired was incommunicable at Marston-Cocking, or nearly so, and yet he was never weary. It was for some inexplicable reason the food and the medicine which his mind needed. It kept him in health, it pacified him, and contented him with his lot.

On the following evening Miriam and her husband sat at tea.

"You didn't quite understand Mr. Armstrong, Miriam?"

"No, not quite."

"Ah! it is not easy; it all lies in the axis not being perpendicular, and in our not being in the middle. Now look here!"

He took a long string; tied one end to the curtain-rod over the window, and brought the other down to the floor. He then took Miriam, placed her underneath it in the middle with her face to the window.

"Now, that is the north, and the top of the string is the pole star. Just imagine the string the axis of a great globe in which the stars are fixed, and that it goes round from your right hand to your left." But to Miriam, although she had so strong an imagination, it was unimaginable. It was odd that she could create Verona and Romeo with such intense reality, and yet that she could not perform such a simple feat as that of portraying to herself the revolution of an inclined sphere.

Mr. Farrow was not disappointed.

"It will be all right," he said, and the next morning he was busy in the shed in the bottom of the garden.

He came to his afternoon meal with glee, and directly it was over, took his wife away to see what he had been doing. The shed had two floors, with a trap-door in the middle. To the topmost corner of the upper story he had fixed a pole which descended obliquely through a hole in the floor. This was the axis, and the floor was the horizon. He had also, by the help of some stoutish wire and some of his withies, fairly improvised a few meridians, so that when Miriam put her head through the trap-door, she seemed to be in the centre of a half globe.

"Now, my dear, it will all be plain. I cannot make the thing turn, but you can fancy a star fixed down there in the east at the end of that withy, and if the withy were to go round, or if the star were to climb up it, it would just go so," tracing its course with his finger, "and set there. Now, those stars near the pole, you see, would never set, and that is why we see them all night long."

It all came to her in an instant.

"Really, how clever you are!" she said.

"Do you think so?" and there was a trace of something serious, something of a surprise on his countenance.

"I have heard Mr. Armstrong talk about the stars before, although never so much as he did that night, and then I've watched them a good bit, and noticed the way they go. As for the planets, they are not so easy, but I think I have got hold of it all."

Miriam looked out of window when she went to bed, and felt a new pleasure. The firmament, instead of being a mere muddle—beautiful, indeed, she had

always thought it—had a plan in it. She marked where one particularly bright star was showing itself in the south-east—it was Sirius; and in the night she rose softly, drew aside the blind, saw him again due south, and recognised the similarity of the arc with that which her husband had constructed with his withies and wire. She lay down again, thinking, as she went off to sleep, that still that silent, eternal march went on. At four she again awoke from light slumber, and crept to the blind again. Another portion of the same arc had been traversed, and Sirius with his jewelled flashes was beginning to descend. She thought she should like to see him actually sink, and she waited and waited till he had disappeared, till the first tint of dawn was discernible in the east, and that almost indistinguishable murmur was heard which precedes the day. She then once more lay down, and when she rose, she was richer by a very simple conception, but still richer. She felt as a novice might feel who had been initiated, and had been intrusted at least with the preliminary secrets of her community. She owed her initiation to Mr. Armstrong, but also to her husband. Experts no doubt may smile, and so may the young people who, in these days of universal knowledge, have got up astronomy for examinations, but nevertheless, in the profounder study of the science there is perhaps no pleasure so sweet and so awful as that which arises, not when books are read about it, but when the heavens are first actually watched, when the movement of the Bear is first actually seen for ourselves, and with the morning Arcturus is discerned punctually over the eastern horizon; when the advance of the stars westwards

through the year, marking the path of the earth in its orbit, is noted, and the moon's path also becomes intelligible.

Mr. Armstrong had long desired to make an orrery for the purpose of instructing a few children and friends, but had never done anything towards it, partly for lack of time, and partly for lack of skill with joinery tools. He now, however, had in Farrow at once a willing pupil and an artist, and the work went forward in Farrow's house, Miriam watching its progress with great interest. She could even contribute her share, and the graduation of the rim was left to her, a task she performed with accuracy after a few failures in pencil. It was a handsome instrument when it was completed. The relative distances of the planets from the sun could not be preserved, nor their relative magnitudes; but what was of more importance, their relative velocities in their orbits were maintained. The day came when the machine was to be first used. Miriam insisted that there should be no experiments with it beforehand. She desired, even at the risk of disappointment, to see a dramatic start into existence. She did not wish her pleasure to be spoiled and her excitement to be diminished by trials. Her husband humoured her, but secretly he took care that every preventible chance of a breakdown should be removed. When she was absent, he tested every pinion and every cog, eased a wheel here and an axle there, and in truth what he had to do in this way with file and sandpaper was almost equal to the labour spent upon saw and chisel. Infinite adjustment was necessary to make the idea a noiseless, smooth practical success, and infinite

precautions had to be taken and devices invented which were not foreseen when the drawing first appeared on paper. With some of these difficulties Miriam, of course, was acquainted. They would not probably have been so great to a professional instrument-maker, but they were very considerable to an amateur. Farrow selected the best-seasoned wood he could find, but it frequently happened that after it was cut it warped a little, and the slightest want of truth threw all the connected part out of gear. Miriam learned something when she saw that a wheel whose revolution was not in a perfect plane could give rise to so much annoyance, and she learned something also when she saw how her husband, in the true spirit of a genuine craftsman, remained discontented if there was the slightest looseness in a bearing.

"Do you think it matters?" said she.

"Matters! Don't you see that if it goes on it gets worse? Every wobble increases the next, and not only so, it sets the whole thing wobbling."

"Couldn't you manage to put a piece on? Suppose you lined that hole with something."

"Oh, no! Not the slightest use; out it must come, and a new one must be put in."

At length the day came for the start. Farrow had made a trial by himself the night before, and nothing could be better. Mr. Armstrong came over, and after tea they all three went upstairs into the large garret which had been used as a workshop. The great handle was taken down and fitted into its place, Mr. Armstrong standing at one end and Miriam and her husband at the other. Obedient to the impulse, every

planet at once answered; Mercury with haste, and Saturn with such deliberation that scarcely any motion was perceptible. The Earth spun its diurnal round, the Moon went forward in her monthly orbit. The lighted ground-glass globe which did duty for the sun showed night and day and the seasons. Miriam was transported, when suddenly there was a jerk and a stop. Something was wrong, and Farrow, who was fortunately turning with great caution, gave a cry such as a man might utter who was suddenly struck a heavy blow. He recovered himself instantly, and luckily at the very first glance saw what was the matter. The nicety of his own handicraft was the cause of the disaster. A shaving not much thicker than a piece of writing-paper had dropped between two cogs. A gentle touch of a quarter of an inch backwards released it.

"Hooray!" he cried in his mad delight, and the mimic planets recommenced their journeys as silently almost as their great archetypes outside.

"Strange," he said with a smile, "that such a chip as that should upset the whole solar system."

Miriam looked at him for a moment inquiringly, and then fell to watching the orrery again. Slowly the moon waxed and waned. Slowly the winter departed from our latitude on the little ball representing our dwelling-place, and the summer came; and as she still watched, slowly and almost unconsciously her arms crept round her husband's waist.

"That is a fair representation," said Mr. Armstrong, "of all that is directly connected with us, excepting, of course, as I have told you, that we could not keep

the distances." A little later on, although he disapproved of "gaping," as he called it, he taught Miriam so much of geometry as was sufficient to make her understand what he meant when he told her that a fixed star yielded no parallax, and that the earth was consequently the merest speck of dust in the universe. She found his simple trigonometry very, very hard, but to her husband it was easy, and with his help she succeeded.

One afternoon, wet and dreary, Miriam had taken up her book. There was nothing to do in the shop, and Mr. Farrow entered the parlour in one of his idle moods, repeating the same behaviour which had so often distressed Miriam when she was reading anything for which he did not care. She had recovered from the dust upstairs a ragged volume in paper boards, and she was musing over the lines—

> "But bound and fixed in fettered solitude
> To pine, the prey of every changing mood."

The poem was about as remote in its whole conception and treatment from Mr. Farrow as it could well be, and his monkey-tricks exasperated her. She shut her book in wrath and misery, left the room, dressed, and went out. The sky had cleared, and just after the sunset there lay a long lake of tenderest bluish-green above the horizon in the west, bounded on its upper coast by the dark grey cloud which the wind was slowly bearing eastward. In the midst of that lake of bluish-green lay Venus, glittering like molten silver. Miriam's first thought was her husband. She always thought of him when she looked at

planets or stars, because he was so intimately connected with them in her mind. She waited till it was late and she then turned homewards. A man overtook her whom she recognised at once as Fitchew the jobbing gardener, porter, rough carpenter, creature of all work in Cowfold, one of the honestest souls in the place. He had his never-failing black pipe in his mouth, which he removed for a moment in order to bid her good-night. She kept up with him, for it was dusk, and she was glad to walk by his side. Fitchews had lived in Cowfold for centuries. An old parson always maintained that the name was originally Fitz-Hugh, but this particular representative of the family was certainly not a Fitz-Hugh but a Fitchew, save that he was as independent as a baron, and, notwithstanding his poverty, cared little or nothing what people thought about him. He could neither read nor write, and was full of the most obstinate and absurd prejudices. He was incredulous of everything which was said to him by people with any education, but what he had heard from those who were as uneducated as himself, or the beliefs, if such they can be called, which grew in his skull mysteriously, by spontaneous generation, he held most tenaciously. His literature was Cowfold, the people, the animals, the inanimate objects of which it was made up, and his criticism on these was often just. He never could be persuaded to enter either church or chapel. Of the arguments for Christianity, of the undesigned coincidences in the Bible, of the evidence from prophecy, of the metaphysical necessity for an incarnation and atonement, he knew nothing, and it was a marvel to all

respectable young persons how Fitchew, whose ignorance would disgrace a charity child, and who did not know that the world was round, or the date of the battle of Hastings, should set himself up against those who were so superior to him.

"What should we say," observed the superintendent of the Dissenting Sunday-school one day to one of his classes, having Fitchew in his mind, "of a man who, if he was on a voyage in a ship commanded by a captain with a knowledge of navigation, should refuse in a storm to obey orders, affirming that they were all of no use, and should betake himself to his own little raft?"

Curiously enough, the Sunday before, the vicar, having the Dissenter in his mind, had said just the same of "unlettered schismatics," as he called them.

Fitchew always had one argument for those friends who strove to convert him. "I don't see as them that goes to church are any better than them as don't. What's *he* know about it?" meaning the parson or the minister, as the case might be.

Fitchew was very rough and coarse, and rather grasping in his dealings with those who employed him, not so much because he was naturally mean, but because he was always determined that well-dressed folk should not "put on him." Nevertheless, he was in his way sympathetic and even tender, particularly to those persons who suffered as he did, for he was afflicted with a kind of nervous dyspepsia, not infrequent even amongst the poor, and it kept him awake at night and gave him the "horrors."

"Well, Fitchew, are you any better?" said Miriam.

"Bad just now. Ain't had no regular sleep for a fortnight. Last night it was awful. I kicked about and sat up; the noise in my ears was something, I can tell you; and then the wind in me! It's my belief that that there noise in my ears is the wind a coming out through them. I couldn't stand it any longer, and I got up and walked up and down the road. Would you believe it, the missus never stirred; there she lay like a stone, and when I came in she says to me, 'Wot's the matter with you?' That's just like her. She goes to bed, turns round, and never knows nothing of anything till the morning. I could have druv my head agin the door-post."

"Well, she cannot help sleeping."

"No," after a long pause, "that's true enough. I tell you what it is—*I* don't want to live for ever."

"Cannot you do anything to help yourself? Have you seen the doctor?"

"Doctor!" in great scorn. "He's no more use than that there dog behind me, nor yet half so much. I am better when I am at work, that's all as I can tell."

"Have you had plenty to do lately?"

"No, not much. Folk are allers after me in the summer-time, but in the winter, when their gardens don't want doing, they never have nothing to say to me. There's one thing about my missus, though. She's precious careful. I never touches the money part of the business. So we get's along."

Miriam knew the "missus" well. She was a little thin-lipped woman, who, notwithstanding her poverty, was most particularly clean. No speck of dirt was to

be seen on her person or in her cottage, but she was as hard as flint. She never showed the least affection for her husband. They had married late in life—why, nobody could tell—and had one child, a girl, whom the mother seemed to disregard just as she did her husband, saving that she dressed her and washed her with the same care which she bestowed on her kettle and candlesticks.

"It's a good thing for you, Fitchew, that she is what she is."

Fitchew hesitated for some time.

"Yes, well, I said to myself, after I'd had a cup of tea and something to eat this morning—I didn't say it afore then, though—that it might be wuss. If she was allus a slaverin' on me and a pityin' me, it wouldn't do me no good; and then we are as we are, and we must make the best of it."

When Miriam parted from Fitchew she had still ten minutes' walk. Before the ten minutes had expired the black veil of rain-cloud was rolled still farther to the east, and the crescent of the young moon gleamed in the dying twilight.

It poured with rain nevertheless during the night. Miriam lay and listened, thinking it would be wet and miserable on the following day. She dropped off to sleep, and at four she rose and went to the window and opened it wide. In streamed the fresh south-west morning air, pure, delicious, scented with all that was sweet from fields and woods, and the bearer inland even as far as Cowfold of Atlantic vitality, dissipating fogs, disinfecting poisons—the Life-Giver.

She put on her clothes silently, went downstairs

and opened the back-door. The ever-watchful dog, hearing in his deepest slumbers the slightest noise, moved in his kennel, but recognised her at once and was still. She called to him to follow her, and he joyfully obeyed. He would have broken out into tumultuous barking if she had not silenced him instantly, and he was forced to content himself with leaping up at her and leaving marks of his paws all over her cloak. Not a soul was to be seen, and she went on undisturbed till she came to her favourite spot where she had first met Mr. Armstrong. She paced about for a little while, and then sat down and once more watched the dawn. It was not a clear sky, but barred towards the east with cloud, the rain-cloud of the night. She watched and watched, and thought after her fashion, mostly with incoherence, but with rapidity and intensity. At last came the first flush of scarlet upon the bars, and the dead storm contributed its own share to the growing beauty. The rooks were now astir, and flew, one after the other, in an irregular line eastwards black against the sky. Still the colour spread, until at last it began to rise into pure light, and in a moment more the first glowing point of the disc was above the horizon. Miriam fell on her knees against the little seat and sobbed, and the dog, wondering, came and sat by her and licked her face with tender pity. Presently she recovered, rose, went home, let herself in softly before her husband was downstairs, and prepared the breakfast. He soon appeared, was in the best of spirits, and laughed at her being able to leave the room without waking him. She looked happy, but was rather quiet at their meal; and after he had caressed the

cat for a little while, he pitched her, as he had done before, on Miriam's lap. She was about to get up to cut some bread and butter, and she went behind him and kissed the top of his head. He turned round, his eyes sparkling, and tried to lay hold of her, but she stepped backward and eluded him. He mused a little, and when she sat down he said in a tone which for him was strangely serious—

"Thank you, my dear; that was very, very sweet."

MICHAEL TREVANION.

MICHAEL TREVANION was a well-to-do stonemason in the town of Perran in Cornwall. He was both working-man and master, and he sat at one end of the heavy stone-saw, with David Trevenna, his servant, at the other, each under his little canopy to protect them a trifle from the sun and rain, slowly and in full view of the purple Cornish sea, sawing the stone for hours together: the water dripped slowly on the saw from a little can above to keep the steel cool, and occasionally they interchanged a word or two—always on terms of perfect equality, although David took wages weekly and Michael paid them. Michael was now a man of about five and forty. He had married young and had two children, of whom the eldest was a youth just one and twenty. Michael was called by his enemies Antinomian. He was fervently religious, upright, temperate, but given somewhat to moodiness and passion. He was singularly shy of talking about his own troubles, of which he had more than his share at home, but often strange clouds cast shadows upon him, and the reasons he

gave for the change observable in him were curiously incompetent to explain such results. David, who had watched him from the other end of the saw for twenty years, knew perfectly what these attacks of melancholy or wrath meant, and that, though their assigned cause lay in the block before them or the weather, the real cause was indoors. His trouble was made worse, because he could not understand why he received no relief, although he had so often laid himself open before the Lord, and wrestled for help in prayer. In his younger days he had been subject to great temptation. One night he had nearly fallen, but an Invisible Power seized him. "It was no more I," he said, "than if somebody had come and laid hold of me by the scruff of my neck," and he was forced away in terror upstairs to his bedroom, where he went on his knees in agony, and the Devil left him, and he became calm and pure. But no such efficient help was given him in the trial of his life. He knew, in his better moments, that the refusal of grace was the Lord's own doing, and he supposed that it was due to His love and desire to try him; but upon this assurance he could not continually rest. It slipped away from under him, and at times he felt himself to be no stronger than the merest man of the world.

His case was very simple and very common—the simplest, commonest case in life. He married, as we have said, when he was young, before he knew what he was doing, and after he had been married twelvemonths, he found he did not care for his wife When they became engaged, he was in the

pride of youth, but curbed by his religion. He mistook passion for love; reason was dumb, and had nothing to do with his choice; he made the one irretrievable false step and was ruined. No strong antipathy developed itself; there were no quarrels, but there was a complete absence of anything like confidence. Michael had never for years really consulted his wife in any difficulty, because he knew he could not get any advice worth a moment's consideration; and he often contrasted his lot with that of David, who had a helpmate like that of the left arm to the right, who knew everything about his affairs, advised him in every perplexity, and cheered him when cast down—a woman on whom he really depended. As David knew well enough, although he never put it in the form of a proposition, there is no joy sweeter than that begotten by the dependence of the man upon the woman for something she can supply but he cannot—not affection only, but assistance.

Michael, as we have said, had two children, a girl and a boy, the boy being the eldest. Against neither could he ever utter a word of complaint. They were honest and faithful. But the girl, Eliza, although unlike her mother, was still less like her father, and had a plain mind, that is to say, a mind endowed with good average common sense, but unrelieved by any touch of genius or poetry. Her intellect was solid but ordinary—a kind of homely brown intellect, untouched by sunset or sunrise tint. A strain of the mother was in her, modified by the influence of the father, and the result was a product

like neither father nor mother, so cunning are the ways of spiritual chemistry. The boy, Robert Trevanion, on the contrary, was his father; not only with no apparent mixture of the mother, but his father intensified. The outside fact was of far less consequence to him than the self-created medium through which it was seen, and his happiness depended much more intimately on himself as he chanced to be at the time than on the world around him. He was apprenticed to his father, and the two were bound together by the tie of companionship and friendship, intertwined with filial and paternal love. What Eliza said, although it was right and proper, never interested the father; but when Robert spoke, Michael invariably looked at him, and often reflected upon his words for hours.

There was in the town of Perran a girl named Susan Shipton. Michael knew very little of the family, save that her father was a draper and went to church. Susan was reputed to be one of the beauties of Perran, although opinion was divided. She had—what were not common in Cornwall—light flaxen hair, blue eyes, and a rosy face, somewhat inclined to be plump. The Shiptons lay completely outside Michael's circle. They were mere formalists in religion, fond of pleasure, and Susan especially was much given to gaiety, went to picnics and dances, rowed herself about in the bay with her friends, and sauntered about the town with her father and mother on Sunday afternoon. She was also fond of bathing, and was a good swimmer. Michael hardly knew how to put his objection into words, but

he nevertheless had a horror of women who could swim. It seemed to him an ungodly accomplishment. He did not believe for a moment that St. Paul would have sanctioned it, and he sternly forbade Eliza the use of one of the bathing-machines which had lately been introduced into Perran for the benefit of the few visitors who had discovered its charms.

It was a summer's morning in June, and Robert had gone along the shore on business to a house which was being built a little way out of the town. The tide was running out fast to the eastward. A small river came down into the bay, and the current was sweeping round the rocks to the left in a great curve at a distance of about two hundred yards from the beach. Inside the curve was smooth water, which lay calmly rippling in the sun, while at its edge the buoys marking the channel were swaying to and fro, and the stream lifted itself against them, swung past them with bright multitudinous eddies, and went out to sea. Half-way in the shallows was one of the bathing-machines, and Robert saw that a girl whom he could not recognise was having a bathe. She swam well, and presently she started off straight outwards. Robert watched her for a moment, and saw her go closer and closer to the dangerous line. He knew she could not see it so well as he could, and he knew too that the buoys which were placed to guide small craft into the harbour were well in the channel, and that at least twenty yards this side of them the ebb would be felt, and with such force that no woman could make headway against it. Suddenly he saw

that her course was deflected to the left, and he knew that unless some help could arrive she would be lost. In an instant his coat, waistcoat, and boots were off, and he was rushing over the sandy shallows, which fortunately stretched out a hundred yards before he was out of his depth. Susan—for it was Miss Shipton—had now perceived her peril and had turned round, but she was overpowered, and he heard a shriek for help. Raising himself out of the water as far as he could, he called out and signalled to her not to go dead against the tide, or even to try and return, but to go on and edge her way to its margin, and so make for the point. This she tried to do, but her strength began to fail—the drift was too much for her. Meanwhile Robert went after her. He was one of the best swimmers in Perran, but when he felt the cooler, deeper water, he was suddenly seized with a kind of fainting and a mist passed over his eyes. He looked at the land, and he was in a moment convinced he should never set foot on it again. He was on the point of sinking, when he bethought himself that if he was to die, he might just as well die after having put forth all his strength; and in an instant, as if touched by some divine spell, the agitation ceased, and he was himself again. In three minutes more he was by Susan's side, had gripped her by the bathing-dress at the back of the neck, and had managed to avail himself of a little swirl which turned inwards just before the rocks were reached. They were safe. She nearly swooned, but recovered herself after a fit of sobbing.

"I owe you my life, Mr. Trevanion; you've saved me—you've saved me."

"Nonsense, Miss Shipton!" He hardly knew what to say. "I would not go so near the tide again, if I were you. You had better get back to the machine as soon as you can and go home. You are about done up." So saying, he ran away to the place where he had left his coat, and went up into the town, thinking intently as he went. Very earnestly he thought; so earnestly that he saw nothing of Perran, and nothing of his neighbours, who wondered at his dripping trousers; thinking very earnestly, not upon his own brave deed, nor even upon his strange attack of weakness, and equally strange recovery, but upon Miss Shipton as she stood by his side at the rock, very earnestly picturing to himself her white arms, her white neck, her long hair falling to her waist, and her beautiful white feet, seen on the sand through the clear sun-sparkling water.

Robert Trevanion, although brought up in the same school of philosophy as his father, belonged to another generation. The time of my history is the beginning of the latter half of the present century, and Michael was already considered somewhat of a fossil. Robert was inconsistent, as the old doctrine when it is decaying, or the new at its advent always is; but the main difference between Michael and Robert was not any distinct divergence, but that truths believed by Michael, and admitted by Robert, failed to impress Robert with that depth and sharpness of cut with which they were wrought into his father. Mere assent is nothing; the question of importance is whether the figuration of the creed is dull or vivid — as vivid as the shadows of a June sun on a white house.

Brilliance of impression is not altogether dependent on mere processes of proof, and a faultless logical demonstration of something which is of eternal import may lie utterly uninfluential and never disturb us.

Robert walked out the next morning to the house he went to visit the day before. Nobody save Miss Shipton and himself knew anything about his adventure. He had made some excuse for his wet clothes. The beach of the little village in the early part of the day was almost always deserted, and the man who attended to the machine had been lying on his back on the shingle smoking his pipe during the few minutes occupied in Miss Shipton's rescue. It was settled weather. The sky was cloudless, and the blue seemed on fire. What little wind there was, was from the south-south-east, and every outline quivered in the heat. The water inshore was absolutely still, and of such an azure as nobody whose sea is that of the Eastern Coast or the Channel can imagine. A boat lay here and there idle, with its shadow its perfect double in unwavering detail and blackness. Just beyond this cerulean lake the river ebb, as yesterday, rippled swiftly round Deadman's Nose; the buoys, with their heads all eastward, breaking the stream as it impatiently hurried past them on its mysterious errand. Beyond and beyond lay the ocean, unruffled, melting into the white haze which united it with the sky on the horizon. Robert loved the summer, and especially a burning summer. The sun, of which other persons complained, some perhaps sincerely, but for the most

part hypocritically — can anybody really hate the sun?—rejoiced him. He loved to be out in it when the light on the unsheltered Cornish rocks and in the whitewashed street was so "glaring," as silly people called it, that they put up parasols and umbrellas, and the warmth which made him withdraw his hand smartly from the old anchor that lay on the grass just above high-water-mark, exhilarated him like wine. He was not a poet, he knew nothing of Greek mythology; and yet on summer days like these, the landscape and seascape were all changed for him. To say that they were a dream would be untrue—they were the reality; the hideous winter, with its damp fogs and rain, were the dream; and yet upon seascape and landscape rested such a miraculous charm that they seemed visionary rather than actual. As he walked along, he naturally thought of yesterday, and the light, the heat, and the colour naturally also renewed in him the picture which he had been continually repainting for himself since yesterday morning. He went to the house, saw the stonework was going on all right, and as he returned, whom should he meet but Miss Shipton, who, undeterred by the fright of the day before, had just had another bathe, and was taking a turn along the cliff to dry her hair, which was hanging over her shoulders. She was not by any means what is called "fast," but she knew how to dress herself. She had a straw hat with a very large brim, a plain brown holland dress, a brown holland parasol, and pretty white shoes; for nothing would ever induce Miss Shipton to put her feet into

the yellow abominations which most persons wore at Perran in the summer.

Robert took off his cap.

"Oh, Mr. Trevanion, I am so glad to see you. You must have thought me such a queer creature. I have not half thanked you. But what could I do? I couldn't write, and I couldn't call, and I thought you would not like a noise being made about it. Yet you saved me from being drowned."

"It was nothing, Miss Shipton," said Robert, smiling. "You were in the ebb there, and I pulled you out of it—just twenty yards, that was all. I hope you haven't told anybody."

"No; as I have said, I thought you wouldn't like it; but nevertheless, although it is all very well for you to talk in that way, I owe you my life."

"Are you going any farther?"

"Just a few steps till my hair is dry."

He turned and walked by her side.

"You see that the buoys are beyond where the channel really begins. I once tried to swim round two of them, but it was as much as ever I could do to get back. If I were you, I would give them a wide berth again; but if you should be caught, go on and do what we did yesterday—try to turn off into the back-stream just inside the point."

"You may be sure I shall never go near them any more."

"Unless you happen to see me," said Robert, his face flushed with his happy thought, "and then you will give me the pleasure of coming after you."

She looked at him, shifted her parasol, and laughed a little.

"Pleasure! really, Mr. Trevanion, were you not very much frightened?"

"Not for myself, except just for an instant."

"Oh, I was awfully frightened! I thought I must give up. I never, never shall forget that moment when you laid hold of me."

"But you have been in the water again this morning."

"Oh, yes! I do enjoy it so, and of course I did not go far. That stupid bathing-man, by the way, ought to have looked out yesterday. He might have come in the boat and have saved you a wetting. I believe he was asleep."

"He is old, and I am very, very glad he did not see you. Aren't you tired? Would you not like to sit down a moment before we go back?"

They sat down on one of the rocks near the edge of the water.

"You are a very good swimmer, Mr. Trevanion."

"No, not very; and yesterday I was particularly bad, for a kind of faintness came over me just before I reached you, and I thought I was done for."

"Dear me! how dreadful! How did you conquer it?"

"Merely by saying to myself I would not give in, and I struggled with it for a minute and then it disappeared."

"How strong you must be! I am sure I could not do that."

'Ah! there was something else, Miss Shipton. You

see, I had you ahead of me, and I thought I could be of some service to you."

Miss Shipton made no direct reply, but threw some pebbles in the water. Robert felt himself gradually overcome, or nearly overcome, by what to him was quite new. He could not keep his voice steady, and although what he said was poor and of no importance, it was charged with expressionless heat. For example, Miss Shipton's parasol dropped and she stooped to pick it up. "Let me pick it up," he said, and his lips quivered, and the *let me pick it up*—a poor, little, thin wire of words—was traversed by an electric current raising them to white-hot glow, and as powerful as that which flows through many mightier and more imposing conductors. What are words? "Good-bye," for example, is said every morning by thousands of creatures in the London suburbs as they run to catch their train, and the present writer has heard it said by a mother to her beloved boy as she stepped on board the tug which was about to leave the big steamer, and she knew she would never see him again. Robert handed her the parasol, and unconsciously, by that curious sympathy by which we are all affected, without any obvious channel of communication, she felt the condition in which his nerves were. She was a little uncomfortable, and, rising, said she thought it was time she was at home. They rose and walked back slowly till their paths parted.

The next day Robert renewed his walk, but there was no Miss Shipton. The summer heat had passed into thunderstorms, and these were succeeded by

miserable grey days with mist, confusing sea, land, and sky, and obliterating every trace of colour. As he went backwards and forwards to the house over the hill, he watched every corner and turned round a hundred times, although his reason would have told him that to expect Miss Shipton in the rain was ridiculously absurd.

Michael Trevanion loved his son with a father's love, but with a mother's too. He rejoiced to talk with him as his father and friend, but there was in him also that wild, ferocious passion for his child which generally belongs to the woman, a passion which in its intense vitality forecasts, apprehends, and truly discerns danger where, to the mere intellect, there is nothing. Michael wondered a little at Robert's unusually frequent visits to his work over the hill, and as he was in the town one morning, he determined to cross the hill himself and see how the house was going on. The mist, which had hung about for a week, had gradually rolled itself into masses as the sun rose higher. It was no longer without form and void, but was detaching itself into huge fragments, which let in the sun and were gradually sucked up by him. Rapidly everything became transformed; and lo! as if by enchantment, the whole sky resumed once more its deepest blue, the perfect semicircle of the horizon sharply revealed itself, and vessels five miles off were visible to their spars. Michael reached the end of his journey and waited, looking out from one of the upper stories. He saw nothing of the splendour of the scene before him. He was restless, he did not quite know why. He could not tell exactly why he was there, but never-

theless he determined to remain. He generally carried a Bible in his pocket, and he turned where he had turned so often before, to the fifteenth chapter of Luke, and read the parable of the prodigal son. He had affixed his own interpretation to that story, and he always held that the point of it was not the love of the father, but the magnificent repentance of the boy who could simply say, "*I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants.*" No wonder the fatted calf was killed for him. No excuses; a noble confession and a trust in his father's affection for him! His own Robert would never go wrong, but if he did, it would cost nothing to forgive him. Then, as he often did, he fell on his knees, and, in front of the space where the window was to come, which would open on a little southern balcony looking over the sea, there, amid the lumps of plaster and shavings, he besought his Maker to preserve the child. Michael was sincere in his prayers, nakedly sincere, and yet there were some things he kept to himself even when he was with his God. He never mentioned his disappointment with his wife, never a word; but he assumed a right to the perfect enjoyment of Robert by way of compensation. Calvinist as he was to the marrow, he would almost have impeached the Divine justice if Robert had been removed from him.

Robert, walking leisurely, turning to look behind him for the hundredth time, had spied Miss Shipton on her road to the town from her accustomed plunge. He intercepted her by going round a meadow to the

left at a great rate, and found himself face to face with her as she was about to pass the corner. The third side of the meadow round which he had raced was an unfinished road, and was a way, though not the usual way, back to Perran.

"Good morning, Miss Shipton. Are you going home?"

"Yes! I suppose you are going to your house."

"Yes," and Robert walked slowly back along the way he had come, Miss Shipton accompanying him, for it *was* the way home. When they came to the corner, however, they both, without noticing it, went eastward, and not to the town.

"Should you like to be a sailor, Mr. Trevanion?" said Miss Shipton, catching sight of the fishing-vessels over the low sea-beaten hedge.

"No, I think not. At least it would depend"——

"Depend on what?"

"I should not like to be away for weeks during the North Sea fishing, if"——

"If it were very cold?"

"Oh, no; that is not what I meant—if I had a wife at home who cared for me and watched for me!"

"Really, Mr. Trevanion, if you were a fisherman you would not take things so seriously. It would all come as a matter of course. You would be busy with your nets, and have no time to think of her."

"But she might think of me."

"Oh, well, perhaps she might now and then; but she would have her house to look after, and all her friends would be near her."

"On stormy nights," said Robert, musingly.

"How very serious you are! Such a lovely day, too—a nice time to be talking about stormy nights! Of course there are stormy nights, but the boats can run into harbour, and if they cannot, the men are not always drowned."

"Certainly not; how foolish, and to think of coming home after five or six weeks on the Doggerbank—oh me! But here is the very rock where we sat the other morning. I am sure you are tired, let us sit down again; your hair is not dry yet."

They sat down.

"It is quite wet still," and Robert ventured to touch it, putting his hand underneath it.

"An awful plague it is! Horrid sandy-coloured stuff, and such a nuisance in the water! I think I shall have it cut short."

"I am sure you won't. Sandy-coloured! it is beautiful."

Miss Shipton tossed her parasol about, shaking her hair loose from his fingers.

"When it is spread out in the sunshine," said Robert, as he separated a little piece of it between his fingers, "the sun shows its varying shades. How lovely they are!" His hand went a little higher, till it touched the back of her neck.

"On stormy nights—on stormy nights," he almost whispered, "I should think of you if you did not think of me."

The hand went a little farther under the hair, his head inclined to it, and he was intoxicated with its own rich scent mingled with that of the sweet sea-

water. He trembled with emotion from head to foot. What is there in life like this? Old as creation, ever new; and under the almost tropical sun, fronting the ocean, in the full heat of youth, he drew her head to his. She yielded, and in a moment his eyes and mouth were buried in her loose-clustering tresses. Before, however, he could say another word he was interrupted. A sheep, feeding above them, alarmed by a stranger's approach, rushed down past them; and hastily recovering himself, Robert looked up. There was nobody, but he saw that they were near his house, and that his father, who had just come to the window, was looking down straight upon them. Miss Shipton immediately said that it was late, rose, and walked homewards; and Robert alone went up the cliff. Michael had seen the girl walk away and had recognised her, but he had not seen what had preceded her departure. Instantly, however, he penetrated the secret, and his first words when Robert presented himself were—

"Why, Robert, that was Miss Shipton."

"Yes, father."

"What were she and you doing here?"

"We happened to meet."

There was something in the tone in which Robert replied which showed the father at once that his son's confidence in him was not illimitable, as he had believed it to be hitherto. It is a heart-breaking time for father and mother when they first become aware that the deepest secrets in their children are intrusted not to them, but to others. Michael felt repelled and was silent; but after a while, as they

both were leaning over the garden-wall and gazing upon the water, he said—

"Mere worldlings, those Shiptons, Robert!"

"I do not know much about them, but they seem an honest, good sort of people."

"Ah! yes, my son; they may be all that. But what is it? They are not the Lord's."

Robert made no reply, and presently father and son left the house and went back to Perran to their work, uncommunicative.

It was a peculiar misfortune for a man of Michael's temperament that he had nobody save his son who could assist him in the shaping of his resolves or in the correction of his conclusions. Brought up in a narrow sect, self-centred, moody, he needed continually that wholesome twist to another point of the compass which intercourse with equals gives. He was continually prone to subjection under the rigorous domination of a single thought, from which he deduced inference after inference, ending in absurdity, which would have been dissipated in an instant by discussion. We complain of people because they are not original, but we do not ask what their originality, if they had any, would be worth. Better a thousand times than the originality of most of us is the average common-sense which is not our own exclusively, but shared with millions of our fellow-beings, and is not due to any one of them. Michael ought to have talked over the events of the morning with his wife; but alas! his wife's counsel was never sought, and not worth having. He did seek counsel at the throne of heavenly grace that night, but the

answer given by the oracle was framed by himself. He was in sore straits. Something seemed to have interposed itself between him and Robert, and when, instead of the old unveiled frankness, Robert was reticent and even suspicious, Michael's heart almost broke, and he went up to his room, and shutting the door, wept bitter tears. His sorrow clothed itself, even at its uttermost, with no words of his own, but always in those of the Book.

"O my son Absalom!" he cried, "my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

He remembered also what his own married life had been; he always trusted that Robert would have a wife who would be a help to him, and he felt sure that this girl Shipton, with her pretty rosy face and blue eyes, had no brains. To think that his boy should repeat the same inexplicable blunder, that she was *silly*, that he would never hear from her lips a serious word! What will she be if trouble comes on him? What will she be when a twelvemonth has passed? What will *he* be when he sits by his fireside in long winter evenings, alone with her, and finds she cannot interest him for a moment?

Worse still, she was not a child of God. He did not know that she ever sought the Lord. She went to church once a day and read her prayers, and that was all. She was not one of the chosen, and she might corrupt him, and he might fall away, and so commit the sin against the Holy Ghost. "O Lord, O Lord!" he prayed one evening, in rebellion rather than as a suppliant, "what has Thy servant done that

Thou shouldst visit him thus?" He almost mutinied, but he was afraid, and his religion came to his rescue, and he broke down into "And yet not my will, the will of the meanest of sinners, but Thine be done." He made up his mind once or twice that he would solemnly remonstrate with his son, but his aspect was such whenever the subject was approached, even from a distance, that he dared not. Hitherto the boy had joyfully submitted to be counselled, and had sought his father's direction, but now, if the conversation turned in a certain direction, a kind of savage reserve was visible, at which Michael was frightened. He was a man of exeeedindly slow conception. For days and days he would often debate within himself, and at the end the fog was as thick as ever. He complained once to David Trevenna of this failing, and David gave him a useful piece of practical advice.

"Leave it alone, master. The more you thinks, the more you muddle yourself. Leave it alone, and when it comes into your head, try to get rid of it. In a week or so the thing will do more for itself than you'll do for it. It will settle, like new beer, and come clear enough. That's what my missus has often said to me, and I know she's right."

But, do what he might, Michael could not in this instance leave it alone. He cast about incessantly for some device by which he could break his son loose from the girl. It was all in vain. She might be frivolous, but there was nothing against her character, and he saw evident signs that if he attempted any exercise of authority he would lose Robert altogether in open revolt. For Robert, it

must be remembered, had never scattered his strength in loose love. He had grown up to manhood in perfect innocence, and all his stored-up passion spent itself in idealising the object which by chance had provoked it.

Michael one night—it was a Sunday night—he was always worse on Sundays when he had not been at work—was unable to sleep, and rose and read the Book. He turned to the Epistle to the Romans, a favourite epistle with him, and deservedly so, for there we come face to face with the divine apostle, with a reality unobscured by miracle or myth. And such a reality! Christianity becomes no longer a marvel, for a man with that force and depth of experience is sufficient to impose a religion on the whole human race, no matter what the form of the creed may be. Michael read in the ninth chapter, "*I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.*" What did Paul mean? Accursed from Christ! What *could* he mean save that he was willing to be damned to save those whom he loved. Why not? Why should not a man be willing to be damned for others? The damnation of a single soul is shut up in itself, and may be the means of saving not only others, but their children and a whole race. Damnation! It is awful, horrible: millions of years, with no relief, with no light from the Most High, and in subjection to His Enemy. "And yet, if it is to save—if it is to save Robert," thought Michael, "God give me strength—I could endure it. Did not the Son Himself venture to risk the wrath of the Father that He might redeem man? What am I? what is my

poor self?" And Michael determined that night that neither his life in this world nor in the next, if he could rescue his child, should be of any account.

How sublime a thing is this dust or dirt we call man! We grovel in view of the vast distances of the fixed stars and their magnitudes, but these distances and these dimensions are a delusion. There is nothing grander in Sirius than in a pebble, nor anything more worthy of admiration and astonishment in his remoteness than in the length of Oxford Street. The true sublime is in the self-negation of the martyr, and it became doubly magnificent in the case of Michael, who was willing not merely to give up a finite existence for something other than himself—to be shot and so end, or to be burnt with a hope of following glory—but to submit for ever to separation and torment, if only he might shield his child from God's displeasure. It may be objected that such a resolution is impossible. Doubtless it is now altogether incredible; but it is so because we no longer know what religion means, or what is the effect produced upon the mind by the constant study of one book and a perfectly unconditional belief in it. Furthermore, as before said, Michael never corrected himself or preserved his sanity by constant intercourse with his fellows. He incessantly brooded, and the offspring of a soul like his begotten on itself, is monstrous and grotesque. He questioned himself and his oracle further. What could Paul mean exactly? God could not curse him if he did no wrong. He could only mean that he was willing to sin and be punished provided Israel might live. It was lawful then to tell a lie or perpetrate

any evil deed in order to protect his child. Something suddenly crossed his mind; what it was we shall see later on. And yet the thought was too awful. He could not endure to sin, not only against his Creator, but against his boy. Perhaps God might pardon him after centuries of suffering; and yet He could not. The gates of hell having once closed upon him, there could be no escape. He struggled in agony, until at last he determined that, first of all, he would speak to Robert, although he knew it would be useless. He would conquer the strange dread he had of remonstrance, and then, if that failed, he would—do anything.

On the Sabbath following, as they came out of the meeting-house in the evening, Michael proposed to Robert that they should walk down to the shore. It was a very unusual proposal, for walking on the Sabbath, save to and from the means of grace, was almost a crime, and Robert assented, not without some curiosity and even alarm. The two went together in silence till they came to the deserted shore. The sun had set behind the point on their right, and far away in the distance could be seen the beneficent interrupted ray of the revolving light. Father and son walked side by side.

"Robert," said Michael at last, "I have long wished to speak to you. God knows I would not do it if He did not command me, but I cannot help it. I fear you have engaged yourself with a young woman who is not one of His children."

"Who told you she was not, father?"

"Who told me? Why, Robert, it is notorious. Who told me? Is she not known to belong to the world? does she ever appear before the Lord?"

"Do you think then, father, that because she does not come to our chapel she cannot be saved?"

"No, you know I do not. The Lord has His followers doubtless in other communions besides our own, but the Shiptons are not His."

"You mean, I suppose, that they do not believe exactly what we believe, and that they go to church?"

"No, no; I mean that she has not found Him, and that she is of the world—of the world! O Robert, Robert! think what you are doing—that you will mate yourself with one who is not elect, that you may have children who will be the children of wrath. You don't know what I have gone through for you. I have wrestled and prayed before I could bring myself to do my duty and talk with you, and even now I cannot speak. What is it which chokes me? O Robert, Robert!"

But Robert, usually docile and tender, was hard and obdurate. The image of Susan rose before his eyes with her head on his shoulder, and he thought to himself that it was necessary at once to make matters quite plain and stop all further trespass on his prerogative. So it is, and so it ever has been. For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and cleave to his wife. There comes a time when the father and mother find that they must withdraw; but it is the order of the world, and has to be accepted, like sickness or death.

"Father," said Robert, "I am not a boy, and you must allow me in these matters to judge for myself." As he spoke his spirit rose; the image of the head on his shoulder, defenceless against attack save for him, became clearer and clearer, and words escaped him which he never afterwards forgot, nor did his father forget. "And it is a shame—I say it is a shame to speak against her. You know nothing about her. Worldly! her children children of wrath, just because she is not of your way of thinking, and isn't—and isn't a humbug, as some of them are. From anybody else I wouldn't stand it;" and Robert turned sharply away and went home.

Michael leant against a groyne to support himself, and looked over the water, seeing nothing. At first he was angry, and if his son had been there, he could have struck him; but presently his anger gave way to pity, to hatred of the girl who had thus seduced him, and to a fixed determination to save him, whatever it might cost. He pondered again and again over that verse of Paul's. He did not believe that he should be excused if he did evil that good might come. He knew that if he did evil, no matter what the result might be, the penalty to the uttermost farthing would be exacted. If Christ's purpose to save mankind could not prevent the Divine anger being poured out on perfect innocence, how much greater would not that anger have been if it had been necessary for Him to sin in order to make the world's salvation sure! Michael firmly believed, too, in the dreadful doctrine that a single lapse from the strait path is enough to damn a man

for ever; that there is no finiteness in a crime which can be counterbalanced by finite expiation, but that sin is infinite. Monstrous, we say; and yet it is difficult to find in the strictest Calvinism anything which is not an obvious dogmatic reflection of a natural fact, a mere transference to theology of what had been pressed upon the mind of the creator of the creed as an everyday law of the world. A crime *is* infinite in its penalties, and the account is never really balanced, as many of us know too well, the lash being laid on us day after day, even to death, for the failings of fifty years ago.

Michael, with his slow ways, remained many weeks undecided. During these weeks he said nothing more to his son, nor did his son say anything to him upon the one subject. Robert was more than ever deferent, and even more than ever affectionate, but there were no signs of any conversion on his part, and to his deference and affection his father paid no regard. He walked in a world by himself, shut up in it, and incessantly repeated the one question, how could he save his son's soul? He pictured himself as a second Christ. If the Christ, the mighty Saviour, felt His Father's wrath on that one dreadful night, it was only fitting that he, Michael, a man who was of so much less worth, should feel it for ever to accomplish a similar end. He was a little exalted by his resolve, and spiritual pride began to show itself; so utterly impossible is it that the purest self-devotion should be, if we may use the word, chemically pure. It is very doubtful if he ever fully realised what he was doing, just as it is doubtful whether in the

time of liveliest conviction there has been a perfect realisation of the world to come. Had he really appreciated the words "torment" and "infinite;" had he really put into "torment" the pangs of a cancer or a death through thirst; had he really put twenty years into "infinity," he would perhaps have recoiled. Nevertheless, the fact remains that this man by some means or other had educated himself into complete self-obliteration for the sake of his child. The present time is disposed to over-rate the intellectual virtues. No matter how unselfish a woman may be, if she cannot discuss the new music or the new metaphysical poetry, she is nothing and nobody cares for her. Centuries ago our standard was different, and it will have to be different again. We shall, it is to be hoped, spend ourselves not in criticism of the record of the saints who sat by the sepulchre, but we shall love as they loved.

Michael comforted himself by a piece of sophistry. He had made up his mind to attempt a stratagem, a wicked lie, if we choose to call it so, for his son's sake, and he was prepared to suffer the penalty for it. If he had thought that in thus sinning he was sinning as an ordinary sinner, he perhaps could not have dared to commit the crime; he could not have faced the Almighty's displeasure. But he thought that, although bound by the Divine justice to mete out to him all the punishment which the sin merited, God would, nevertheless, consider him as a sinner for His glory.

One evening—the summer had not yet departed—father and son walked out to the house on the cliff.

"Robert," said Michael suddenly, and with the strength of a man who gathers himself up to do what for a long time he has been afraid to do, and is even bolder apparently than if he had known no fear, "I have spoken my mind to you as God in heaven bade me about Miss Shipton, and this is the last word I shall say. He knows that I have prayed for you from your childhood up—that I have prayed that, above everything, he would grant that you should have one of His own for your wife, who should bring up your children in the fear of the Lord. He alone knows how I have wrestled for you day and night, ay, in the dark hours of the night; for you are my only son, and I looked that you and she whom God might choose for you should be the delight and support of my old age. But it is not to be. God has, for His own good purposes, not blessed me as He has blessed others, and the home for which I hoped I am not to have. Oh, my son, my son!" He had meant to say more, but at the moment he could not.

"Father, father!" said Robert, much moved—the anger he usually felt at his father's references to Susan Shipton melting into pity—"why not? why not? You don't know Susan; you condemn her just because she don't go to our meeting. She shall love you like your own child."

Another man would, perhaps, have relented, but his system was wrought into his very marrow—a part of himself in a manner incomprehensible. The distinction between the world and the Church is now nothing to us. We are on the best of terms

with people who every Sunday are expressly assigned to everlasting fire. But to Michael the distinction was what it was to Ephraim Macbriar. The Spirit descended on him — whose spirit, it is not for us to say.

"Are you sure of Miss Shipton, Robert?"

"Sure of her, father! What do you mean?"

"Do you know what she has been in time past?"

"I don't understand you."

"Do you know why Cadman left the Shiptons?"

Robert stopped suddenly as if struck by a blow, and then his behaviour instantly changed. He completely forgot himself and was furious.

"Father, I say it is a wicked, cruel shame—a wicked, cruel lie. I do not care if I tell you so. I will not listen to it," and he tore himself away.

He believed it was a lie — believed it with the same distinctness as he believed in the existence of the hedge by his side which lacerated his hand as he turned round; and yet the lie struck him like a poisoned barbed arrow, and he could not drag himself loose from it. No man could have loved Desdemona better than Othello, and yet, before there was any evidence, did he not say of Iago—

> "This honest creature doubtless
> Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds."

He went home, and on his way to his room upstairs he passed through the little office in which he and his father made out their bills and kept their accounts. On the desk lay half a sheet of a letter

He looked at it at first mechanically, and then began to read with the most intense interest. It was only half a sheet, and the other half was nowhere to be found. It ran as follows:—

"and I can assure you I cannot afford to marry. Besides, I don't know that she cares anything for me now. It was very wrong; but, sir, when you remember that I am a young man and that Susan was so attractive, I think I may be forgiven. I hope some day to make her amends if she still loves me, but, sir, I must wait.—Yours truly,

WALTER CADMAN.

"MR. MICHAEL TREVANION."

This was the plot. The Shiptons some short time ago had an assistant in their employ, who was dismissed for improper intimacy with a servant-girl named Susan Coleman, who lived next door. As was the case with most servant-girls in those days, nobody ever heard her surname, and she was known by the name of Susan only. The affair was kept a profound secret, for she was a member of the congregation to which Michael belonged; and Mr. Shipton, for trade reasons, was anxious that it should not be made public. Michael, as one of the deacons, knew all about it, but Robert knew nothing. The girl left her place before the consequences of her crime became public; and Michael had written to the man Cadman, telling him he ought to support the child of which he was the father. When he received the answer, a sudden thought struck him. The last page might be used for a purpose, and so he hatched his monstrous scheme,

and left the paper where he knew that, sooner or later, Robert would see it.

When Michael came home, Robert was not there; a bill-head lay near Cadman's note with the brief announcement—

"I have left for ever.—Your affectionate son,
"ROBERT."

Michael's first emotion, strange to say, was something like joy. He had succeeded, and Robert was removed from the wiles of the tempter. But when the morning came, he looked again, and he saw the words "for ever," and he realised that his son had gone; that he would never see him any more; that perhaps he might have committed self-murder. His human nature got the better of every other nature in him, divine or diabolic, and he was distracted. He could not pray after his wont; he tried, but he had no utterance; he felt himself rebellious, blasphemous, impious, and he rose from his bedside without a word. He went out into the street and down to the shore, trembling lest he should hear from the first man he saw that his son's body had been thrown up on the sand; and then he remembered how Robert could swim, and that he would probably hang a stone round his neck and be at the bottom of some deep pool. He could not go back; people would ask where his son was, and what could he say? He had murdered him. He had thought to save him, and he was dead. He walked and walked till he could walk no more, and a great horror came on him—a horror of great

darkness. The Eternal Arms were unclasped, and he felt himself sinking—into what he knew not. He could not describe his terror to himself. It was nameless, shapeless, awful, infinite; and all he could do was to cry out in agony; the words of the Book, even in this his most desperate moment, serving to voice the experience for him—"My God! my God! why hast Thou forsaken me?" It became intolerable, and his brain began to turn. He reflected though, even then, upon the disgrace of suicide. For himself he did not care; for had not God abandoned him? and what worse thing could befall him? But then his good name and the brand of infamy which would be affixed to Robert should he still live! Could he not die so that it might be set down as an accident? He could swim; and although he had not been often in the water of late years, it would not be thought extraordinary if on a blazing morning he should bathe. He took off his clothes, and in a moment was in the sea, striking out for the river channel and the ebbing tide, which he knew would bear him away to the ocean. He saw nothing, heard nothing, till just as he neared the buoy and the fatal eddy was before him, when there escaped from him a cry—a scream—a prayer of commitment to Him whom he believed he had so loyally served—served with such damnable, such treasonable fidelity—the God who had now turned away from him.

But the buoy was not reached. A hand was on him, firm but soft, grasping him by the hair at the back of his neck, which he wore long in Puritanic fashion, and the hand held him and he knew no

more. Susan Shipton, bathing that morning, had seen a human being in the water nearing the point where she herself so nearly lost her life. Without a moment's hesitation she made after him, and was fortunate enough to attract the attention of two men in a punt, who followed her. She came up just in time, and with their help Michael was saved. He was senseless, but after a few hours he recovered, and asked his wife, who was standing by his bedside, who rescued him.

"Why, it was Susan Shipton. She was in the water and came after you, and then, luckily, there was a boat near at hand."

Susan was on the other side of the bed, and he did not see her. She bent over him and kissed him.

He turned round, and thoughts rushed through his brain with a rapidity sufficient to make one short moment a thousand years; but he said nothing, and presently, almost for the first time in his life, he broke down into sobbing. He turned away from her and could not look at her.

"You see, Mr. Trevanion," she said smilingly, "just about that very place I was nearly drowned myself —I don't know whether you ever heard of it—and I hardly ever keep my eyes off it now when I am anywhere near it, although I am not afraid of going pretty near after what Robert told me. When you want a wash again—I knew you could swim well, by the way, but I didn't know you ever went into the water now—you must give the buoy a wider berth." She stooped down and whispered to him—"I never told a soul before, but it was Robert who saved me. We

are quits now. Robert saved me, and I have done something to save you, though not so much as Robert, because he had no boat." Then she kissed his forehead again, delighted at the thought that she could put something into the balance against her lover's heroism. How proud he would be of her! She would be able, moreover, to stand up a little bit against him. It was very pleasant to her to think she owed so much to him, but she liked also to think that she had something of her own.

Michael caught hold of her round the neck, embracing her with a passionate fervour which she supposed to be gratitude, but it was not altogether that.

"Do you know where Robert has gone?" she said. "He was not at home last night."

"He has gone on—on—some business. I must go too."

"You cannot go just yet; not till you have got over the shock."

"I can—I can. Leave me, and I will dress myself. It is important business, and I must see him. But, Susan, here—I want you."

It was the first time he had ever called her Susan. She came back to him. "Listen!" he cried. She bent her head down, but he was silent. At last, with his arms again around her, he said, "My child, my child, my child!"

"Me!" she answered innocently. "Do you mean me? do you really? I couldn't think what you wanted to say, but that's enough. My dearest, dearest father! Oh, how happy Robert will be! and so am I. We

thought you didn't care for me; and I know I am a poor, foolish girl, not half good enough for Robert; but I *do* love him, and I never loved anybody else; and I *do* love you."

When she had left, Michael rose from his bed. His faith remained unchanged, but it presented itself to him in a different shape. A new and hitherto unnoticed article in his creed forced itself before him. God's hand—for it *was* God's hand—had plucked him out of the sea and brought him back to life. What did that mean? Ah! what was he?—a worm of the earth! How dare he lift himself up against the Almighty's designs? The Almighty asked him the question eternally repeated to us, which He had asked thousands of years ago, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. . . . Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings forward to the south?" "The hawk flies not by my wisdom," murmured Michael to himself, "nor doth the eagle at my command make her nest on high. Ah, it is by His wisdom and at His command; how should I dare to interfere? I see it—I see it all now. 'I have uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.'" After his fashion and through his religion he had said to himself the last word which can be uttered by man. He knelt down and prayed, and although he was much given to extempore prayer, he did not, in this his most intense moment, go beyond the prayer of our Lord, which, moreover, expressed what he wanted better than any words of his own. "*Thy*

will," he repeated, "*Thy* will." His one thought now was his son, but he knew not where to find him. He went out and he saw his man, David Trevenna.

"He was off in a hurry; only just caught the coach," said David.

"Who? What coach?"

"Why, Robert; going to Plymouth."

Michael did not answer, but hurried to his stable where his little pony was kept, and put him in the light cart. He told his wife that he had some business in Plymouth with Robert, packed up a few things, took some money, and in a few minutes was on the Truro road. At Truro he found the mail, and within twelve hours he was at Plymouth. Dismounting, he asked eagerly if they had a young man at the inn who had come from Cornwall the day before.

"What, one as is waiting for the packet?"

"Yes," said Michael at a venture.

"Yes, he's here, but he isn't in just now. Gone out for a walk."

The one point in Plymouth to which everybody naturally turns is the Hoe, and thither Michael went. It was morning in early autumn or late summer, and the whole Sound lay spread out under the sun in perfect peace. The woods of Mount Edgecumbe were almost black in the intense light, and far away in the distance, for the air was clear, a sharp eye might just discern the Eddystone, the merest speck, rising above the water. It was a wonderful scene, but Michael saw nothing of it. When he came out of the street which leads up from

the town to the Hoe, he looked round as a man might look for escape if a devouring fire were behind him, and he saw his son a hundred yards in front of him gazing over the sea. With a cry of thanks to his God Michael rushed forward, and just as Robert turned round caught him in his arms, but could not speak.

At last he found a few words.

"It is all a mistake, Robert—it is all wrong. Susan is yours—she is mine. Come back with me."

Robert, as much moved as his father, fell on his neck as if he had been a woman, and then led him gently down the slope, away from curious persons who had watched this remarkable greeting, and took Michael to be some strange person who had accidentally met his child or a relative after long separation.

"Foreigners, most likely; that's their way. It looks odd to English people," remarked a lady to her daughter. It did look odd, and would have looked odd to most of us—to us who belong to a generation which sees in the relationship between father and son nothing more than in that between the most casual acquaintances with the disadvantage of inequality of age, a generation to whom the father is—often excusably—a person to be touched twice a day with the tips of the fingers, a postponement of a full share in the business, a person to be treated with—respect? Good gracious! If it were not bad form, it would be a joke worth playing to slip the chair away from the old man as he is going to sit down,

and see him sprawl on the floor. Why, in the name of heaven, does he come up to the City every day? He ought to retire, and leave that expensive place at Clapham, and take a cottage in some cheap part, somewhere in Cambridgeshire or Essex.

"Robert," said Michael, "I have sinned, although it was for the Lord's sake, and He has rebuked me. I thought to take upon myself His direction of His affairs; but He is wiser than I. I believed I was sure of His will, but I was mistaken. He knows that what I did, I did for love of your soul, my child; but I was grievously wrong."

The father humbled himself before the son, but in his humiliation became majestic, and in after years, when he was dead and gone, there was no scene in the long intercourse with him which lived with a brighter and fairer light in the son's memory.

"You know nothing then against Susan?"

"Nothing!"

"I found a bit of a letter on your desk from Cadman. I could not help reading it. Had that anything to do with her?"

"Nothing!"

"Father, you seem faint and you tremble; hadn't you better go in doors and take something, and lie down? We cannot get home till to-morrow."

The father went to the inn with difficulty; he had tasted no food for many hours, and had not slept for some time, but he could neither eat nor sleep. Hitherto God's will had appeared to him ascertainable with comparative ease, and he had been as certain of the Divine

direction as if he had seen a finger-post or heard the word in his ear. But now he was dazed and in doubt. He was convinced that his rescue by Susan was an interposition of Providence, and if so, then all his former conclusions were wrong. What was he to do? How was he henceforth to know the mind of his Master? Oh, how he wished he had lived in the days when the oracle was not darkened—in the days of Moses, when God spake from the Mount, when there was the continual burnt-offering at the door of the tabernacle, "where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee." God really did intend that Robert should marry Susan! "If righteousness and judgment," he cried, inverting the Psalm, "are the habitation of His throne, clouds and darkness are round about Him." But he submitted. "Thou art wiser than I," he prayed. It was mere presumption then to have risked the loss of his soul in the blind belief that it was for God's cause. The sin had been committed, the lie had been uttered; would God pardon him? and it was mercifully whispered to him that he was forgiven for His sake. So was he saved from uttermost despair.

In the evening he said he would go out and breathe a little fresh air before bedtime. It was a perfectly unsullied night, with no moon, but with brilliant stars. Father and son sat upon a bench facing the sea, and the lighthouse from the rock sent its bright beam across the water. There is consolation and hope in those vivid rays. They speak of something superior to the darkness or storm—something which has been raised by human intelligence and human effort.

Robert turned round to his father.

"Look at the light, father, fourteen miles away."

But his father did not see any light, or, if he did, it was not the Eddystone light—he was dead!

Robert never revealed his father's secret to a soul—not even to Susan. Nobody but Robert ever knew the reason for the journey to Plymouth. His interpretation of God's designs turned out to be nearer the truth than that of his father; for Susan, the worldling, as Michael thought her to be, became a devoted wife, and made Robert a happy husband to the end of his days.

THE END.

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.
Edinburgh and London

PR
5795
W7M5
19--

White, William Hale
Miriam's schooling and other papers

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY